VOL. LXXV
JULY 1970



75th Anniversary Number

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

ARISE, AWAKE, AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED



ADVAITA ASHRAMA
MAYAVATI, HIMALAYAS

Tripura will have enrolment of cent percent its children of the age group of 6 to 11 in school by the end of the Fourth Plan. And, with the systemetic expansion of medical facilities even in the remotest rural areas; construction of highways, major district roads and village roads for communication, digging up of tube-wells for water supply; setting up of colonies for wandering tribals; introduction of improved, agricultural methods; expanding of cottage industries and setting up of a number of small scale and medium industries; increasing the number of co-operative societies; setting up of Animal Husbandry units in the remotest rural and inaccessible areas. Tripura has been endeavouring to keep step with the rest of India in its onward march to planned prosperity.



ISSUED BY THE GOVT OF TRIPURA

Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

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CONTENTS

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3. The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in signed articles.

4. For all quotations in articles adequate references—including names of authors, publications, publishers with address, year of publication, and page number —should be provided.

5. Articles, not accepted for publication are not returned, unless so requested by contributors and adequate stamps for the purpose enclosed.

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A REQUEST TO PUBLISHERS

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CONTENTS—(*Continued*)

COVER PAGE

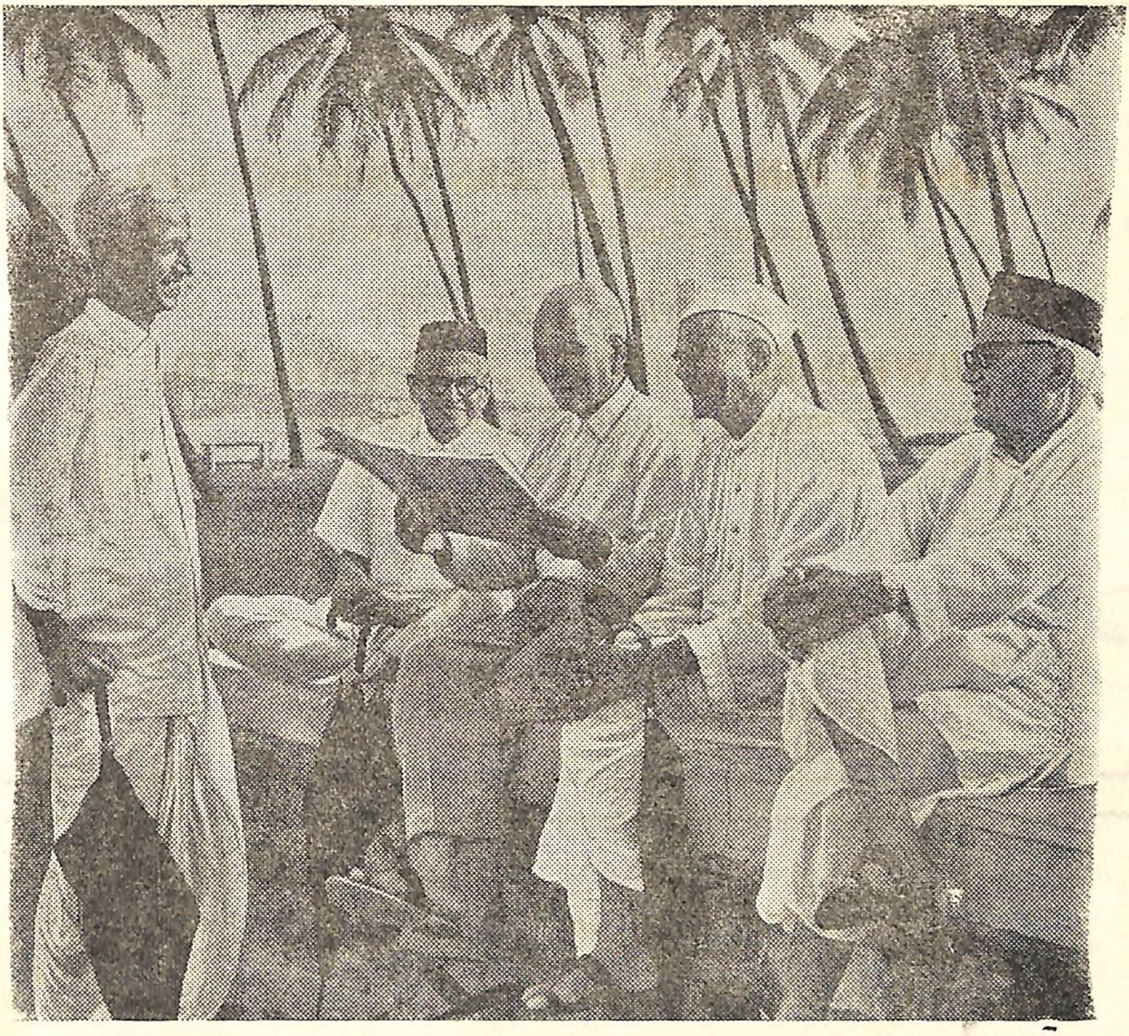
Top : Himalayan snow-range with the spire of Kedarnath temple in the foreground.

Bottom : Vivekananda Rock, Kanyakumari

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

CONTENTS—(*Continued*)







उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXV JULY 1970 No. 7

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question: 'Have you seen God, Sir ?'

Sri Ramakrishna : 'Yes, I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense. God can be realized, one can see and talk to Him as I am doing with you. But who cares to do so ? People shed torrents of tears for their wife and children, for wealth or property, but who does so for the sake of God ? If one weeps sincerely for Him, He surely manifests Himself.' [1]

Question: 'Sir, has God form or has He none ?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'No one can say with finality that God is only "this" and nothing else. He is formless, and again He has forms. For the *bhakta* He assumes forms. But He is formless for the *jñāni,* that is, for him who looks on the world as a mere dream. The *bhakta* feels that he is one entity and the world another. Therefore God reveals Himself to him as a Person. But the *jñāni*—the Vedantist, for instance—always reasons, applying the process of "not this, not this". Through this discrimination he realizes, by his inner perception, that the ego and the universe are both illusory, like a dream. Then the *jñāni* realizes Brahman in his own consciousness. He cannot describe what Brahman is.

'Do you know what I mean ? Think of Brahman, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, as a shoreless ocean. Through the cooling influence, as it were, of the *bhakta's* love, the water has frozen at places into blocks of ice. In other words, God now and then assumes various forms for His lovers and reveals Himself to them as a Person. But with the rising of the sun of Knowledge, the blocks of ice melt. Then one doesn't feel any more that God is a Person, nor does one see God's forms. What He is cannot be described. Who will describe Him ? He who would do so disappears. He cannot find his "I" any more.

---

[1] Question by Narendranath. Vide: His Eastern and Western Disciples: *Life of Swami Vivekananda,* Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, 1960, p. 47.

'If one analyses oneself, one doesn't find any such thing as "I". Take an onion, for instance. First of all you peel off the red outer skin; then you find thick white skins. Peel off these one after the other, and you won't find anything inside.

'In that state a man no longer finds the existence of his ego. And who is there left to seek? Who can describe how he feels in that state—in his own Pure Consciousness—about the real nature of Brahman? Once a salt doll went to measure the depth of the ocean. No sooner was it in the water than it melted. Now who was to tell the depth?

There is a sign of Perfect Knowledge. Man becomes silent when It is attained. Then the "I", which may be likened to the salt doll melts in the ocean of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute and becomes one with It. Not the slightest trace of distinction is left.

'As long as his self-analysis is not complete, man argues with much ado. But he becomes silent when he completes it. When the empty pitcher has been filled with water, when the water inside the pitcher becomes one with the water of the lake outside, no more sound is heard. Sound comes from the pitcher as long as the pitcher is not filled with water.

'People used to say in olden days that no boat returns after having once entered the "black waters" of the ocean.

'All trouble and botheration come to an end when the "I" dies. You may indulge in thousands of reasonings, but still the "I" doesn't disappear. For people like you and me, it is good to have the feeling: "I am a lover of God."

'The Saguṇa Brahman is meant for the *bhakta*. In other words, a *bhakta* believes that God has attributes and reveals Himself to men as a Person, assuming forms. It is He who listens to our prayers. The prayers that you utter are directed to Him alone.... It doesn't matter whether you accept God with form or not. It is enough to feel that God is a Person who listens to our prayers, who creates, preserves, and destroys the universe, and who is endowed with infinite power.

'It is easier to attain God by following the path of devotion.'[2]

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[2] Question by a Brahmo Devotee. Vide: 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1964, pp. 78-9.



TO THE AWAKENED INDIA*

Once more awake !
For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life
Anew and rest to lotus-eyes for visions
Daring yet. The world in need awaits, O Truth !
No death for thee !

Resume thy march,
With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful rest, even of the roadside dust
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold, and free. Awakener, ever
Forward ! Speak thy stirring words.

Thy home is gone,
Where loving hearts had brought thee up, and
Watched with joy thy growth. But Fate is strong—
This is the law—all things come back to the source
They sprung, their strength to renew.

Then start afresh
From the land of thy birth, where vast cloud-belted
Snows do bless and put their strength in thee,
For working wonders new. The heavenly
River tune thy voice to her own immortal song ;
Deodar shades give thee eternal peace.

And all above,
Himala's daughter Uma, gentle, pure,
The Mother that resides in all as Power
And Life, who works all works, and
Makes of One the world, whose mercy
Opes the gate to Truth, and shows
The One in All, give thee untiring
Strength, which is Infinite Love.

They bless thee all,
The seers great, whom age nor clime
Can claim their own, the fathers of the
Race, who felt the heart of Truth the same,
And bravely taught to man ill-voiced or
Well. Their servant, thou hast got
The secret—'tis but One.

Then speak, O Love!
Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how
Visions melt, and fold on fold of dreams
Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone,
In all its glory shines—

And tell the world—
Awake, arise, and dream no more!
This is the land of dreams, where Karma
Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,
Of flowers sweet or noxious, and none
Has root or stem, being born in naught, which
The softest breath of Truth drives back to
Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

— *Swami Vivekananda*

---

* Written to *Prabuddha Bharata* or *Awakened India*, in August 1898, when the journal was transferred from Madras to Almora, Himalayas, into the hands of the Brotherhood founded by Swami Vivekananda.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

I have great pleasure in sending my hearty greetings and congratulations to the *Prabuddha Bharata* on the happy occasion of its reaching the seventy-fifth year of service.

Prabuddha Bharata or 'Awakened India' is the journal not only of awakened India, but of an awakened world too. By broadcasting the message of the Indian tradition in its universal aspects, especially as that message is energized and adapted for modern needs by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, this journal has played a notable role in the resurgence of India.

Swami Vivekananda, who is the founding-father and patron-saint of the *Prabuddha Bharata,* has exhorted it to 'tell the world: Awake, arise and dream no more'. The aim of the *Prabuddha Bharata,* as conceived by him, is: 'To preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.'

I need hardly emphasize the urgent requirement that, though technological, social, political, ethical, cultural and many other forms of development are all involved in the national and international awakening we envisage and strive for, it will be a real awakening only if these various forms of development are so oriented as to contribute, directly or indirectly, to the spiritual evolution of all. May the inspiring contents of *Prabuddha Bharata* reach all varieties of truth-seekers, of all classes and creeds, awakening them to the reality of the Supreme Spirit!

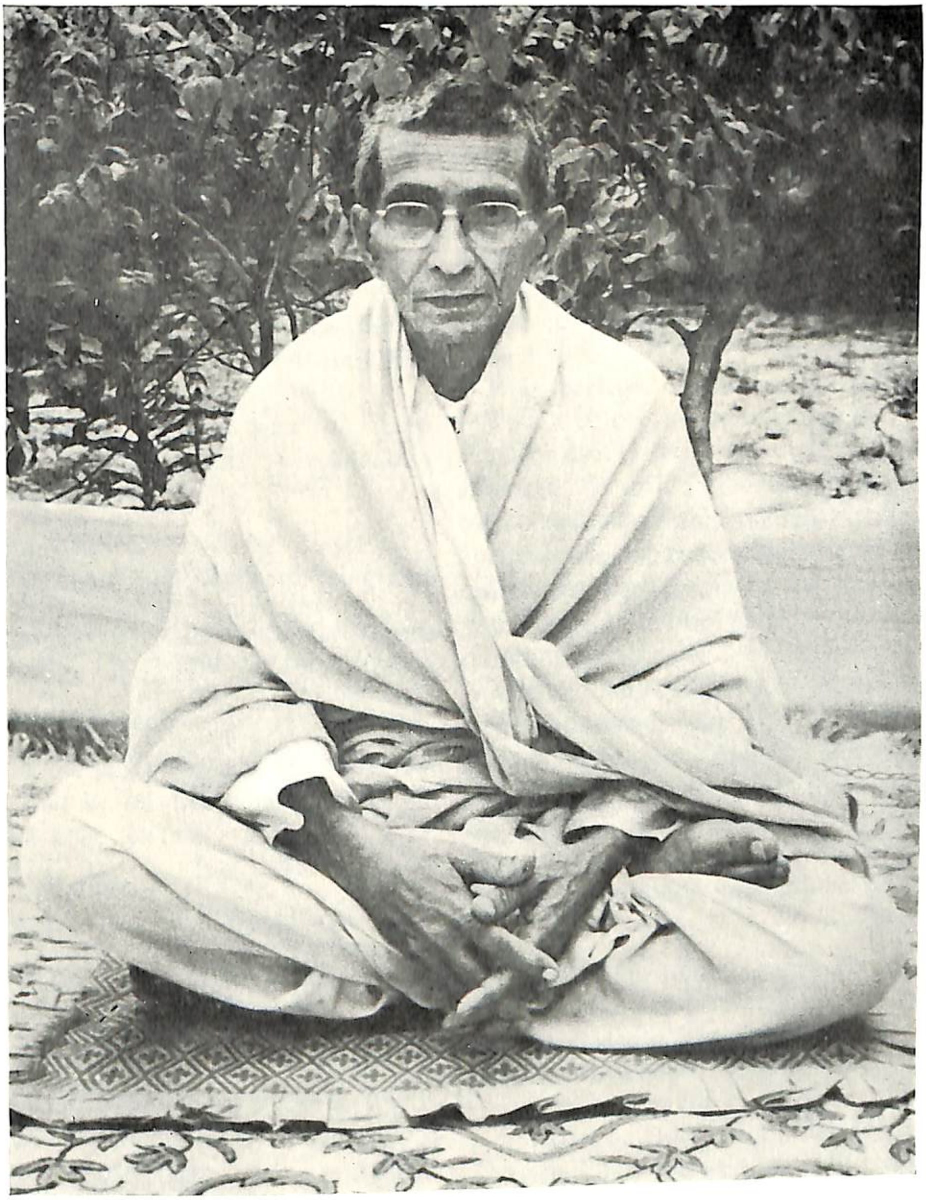
The truths of eternity have to be disseminated in the language of the day. I have every hope that the *Prabuddha Bharata* will continue to fulfil its laudable task in a rich, broad, and free atmosphere of spiritual service and constructive thought. Let its voice be modern and many-sided, yet not distracting or distracted. It is a task that will tax the best.

I call on all who are in sympathy with the aims and objects of the *Prabuddha Bharata* and who have the needed competence, to co-operate in every way possible, especially by contributing suitable matter for publication. Such co-operation is as much a form of worshipful service as famine relief or medical aid.

I pray that the grace of the Divine Mother and of Sri Ramakrishna be showered upon the *Prabuddha Bharata* in the successful pursuit of its high endeavour.

Belur Math
April 16, 1970

Swami Vireswarananda



Swami Vireswarananda
President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission

'AWAKENER, EVER FORWARD'

I

Early in its life *Prabuddha Bharata* had a mishap. After two years of existence it suddenly died in June 1898.

But that Lazarus was not really dead was known only when the call of the mighty One, 'Lazarus, come forth!'[1] stirred him back to life.

That *Prabuddha Bharata* was not dead came to be known when Vivekananda called forth:

Once more awake!
For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life
Anew, and rest to lotus eyes, for visions
Daring yet. The world in need awaits, O Truth!
No death for thee![2]

And *Prabuddha Bharata* awoke and resumed its march, for the command of the Leader had gone forth:

Resume thy march,
With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful rest, even of the roadside dust
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold, and free, Awakener, ever
Forward! Speak thy stirring words.[3]

And here is *Prabuddha Bharata* today, on the march, entering its seventy-fifth year, with gentle steps, 'yet strong and steady, blissful, bold and free', and moving forward. It has been the witness of history and its quiet inspirer.

In July 1896 when the *Prabuddha Bharata* was started it had only a promise before it and no performance behind. But in July 1970 when the Journal has entered its seventy-fifth year it has a performance behind and also the continuing promise.

Has its performance been true to its promise?

It is perhaps for others to judge this.

Today before us there stand in file neatly bound seventy-four volumes of *Prabuddha Bharata*. It is a fascinating experience trying to recreate within oneself all the agonies and ecstasies of successive editors who have quietly worked from the Journal's Himalayan abode to make possible its publication month after month.

Writing editorials for a journal like this is perhaps never easy and it is no easier to present readable articles. But, obviously, to say the least, through these long years the Journal has maintained its own standard. Labours of love by many writers and helpers have made this possible. May all be blessed!

In the first place, from the Himalayan heights, like the sentinel of Destiny, *Prabuddha Bharata* has always tried to remain true to the central behests of its founder, Swami Vivekananda:

(1) Always hold on to the Highest.
(2) Be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity and your country.
(3) Tell the world: 'Awake, arise and dream no more'.
(4) Preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.

If the Journal has succeeded in accomplishing these tasks all through the years,

---

[1] St. John, XI. 43.

[2] From Swami Vivekananda's poem 'To the Awakened India'. Vide: *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 14, Vol. IV, 1963, p. 387.

[3] Ibid.

this has been due, more than to the devoted efforts of successive editors, to an imponderable which always imperceptibly attended its life-process.

In describing this imponderable Swami Vivekananda wrote:

They bless thee all,
The seers great, whom age nor clime
Can claim their own, the fathers of the Race, who felt the heart of Truth the same,
And bravely taught to man ill-voiced or Well. Their servant, thou hast got
The secret—'tis but One.[4]

The strength that is of *Prabuddha Bharata* comes from these facts: that on its head are the reinforced blessings of the seers of the ages assured by Vivekananda, himself silently conferring on it his own blessings also; that it has remained their most devoted servant; and what is more it has got the secret—'tis but One.

This impregnable and inalienable source of *Prabuddha Bharata's* strength has also been the cause of its success. By success we do not here mean financial or numerical success, but this very opportunity given it to serve mankind all these years in an area of supreme importance.

The mandate of the Leader has been to hold on to the Highest and to be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity and country.

How did the Journal accomplish this complex and stupendous task?

By a very simple method: by being guided by the fundamental principles of Vedanta—the divinity of the soul and the unity of existence. It had already got 'the secret—'tis but One'.

With light jetting out of your forehead, if you enter a dark cave can you really encounter darkness? The same is the case when the principles of Vedanta are actualized in life.

[3] Ibid.

The solution of all the problems of existence is in being informed with the principle of the unity of existence itself.

The solution of all human problems is in opening a way for actualizing the potentiality of man, his divinity.

It is only by holding on to the Highest that we are faithful to Truth, to humanity and our country simultaneously, and in no other way. What is less than the Highest cannot be an adequate source for all.

No one serves his country unless he is faithful to truth, for truth alone triumphs, not falsehood—and that in spite of all the cleverness and diplomacy of man. And what does harm to humanity will ill serve a country.

Changing passions and fashions of time always tend to assert that to hold on to the Highest is against the immediate and other interests of man, for you cannot cash the Highest over the counter of business. There you need the coin of the day. But history studied in depth proves that nothing is of greater interest to man than the Highest. Unless we hold on to the Highest we cannot escape the tyranny of the lowest within us and amongst us. People who have tried to serve the interests of their country, sacrificing both truth and humanity, ended by causing grievous harm to their own countries. They did not have 'the secret—'tis but One'.

It has been the business of this Journal down the years to keep vivid before all the fact of ultimate oneness as the guiding principle of our thoughts and actions, battles and aspirations. In that scheme patriotism had its legitimate place undoubtedly, but it ill served any country to allow patriotic fervour to be reduced to jingoistic fever. Again, the malady of seeking all inspiration from without—the opposite pole of patriotism—has gone against Home, which is the root of oneness. Without respecting the nearest how could

we make the farthest our own? And if we sacrifice our world where will our home stand?

In all its thought-undertakings through these years the function of this Journal has been that of the awakener ever going forward. In trifles and in the momentous, in strife and in adventure, in all undertakings of life, in fighting problems, in devising means and approaching ends, man's most important but mostly unattended-to need is that of awakening, for the more awakened we are the more enlightened we are. With enlightenment goes the opening of greater dimensions of being. And this is 'man-making'. The Journal in its silent manner has worked to open up within man a greater awareness of his own worth and power, dignity and divinity. Did this mean doing anything worthwhile? Well, what is nobler and more practical than to help reveal before the wondering eyes of man what he himself is? When he knows himself better, is he not then greater and to that extent transformed?

In exposing the spiritual treasure of India to all the peoples of the world and to the Indians themselves; in inspiring concord among the faiths of mankind; in holding aloft the light of sanity before all types of revolutionaries; in clearing the grounds of understanding between civilizations, *Prabuddha Bharata* has unwinkingly worked without being dismayed by the operations of contrary forces. In trying to introduce the rhythm of the timeless into the fast-moving affairs of time, the Journal no doubt occasionally encountered misgivings, but its heart and face being the same, ultimately it won over trust and loyalty.

II

Prabuddha Bharata faces the uncertain future with the certainty of its faith emanating from the blessings received. Without doubt and without fear, with unfaltering steps it enters the new times of man. It is aware that it has 'the secret—'tis but One', and that it has a mission of its own.

It brings before man the challenge of truth and the solace of love. The challenge, in the language of the Upaniṣad, is: It is only when the sky will be rolled up as if it were a piece of skin, that there will be an end of the miseries of life without knowing God.[5] The solace is: No one has a right to despair until and unless he has become a sacrifice on the altar of man.

Man must know that man is supreme. He is not to be sacrificed for the sake of any system. All systems may be sacrificed for his sake.

If man deteriorates and declines while society advances and civilization becomes streamlined, freedom has become slavery, pilgrimage has become a journey to a dungeon. While society progresses, man must advance from the quantitative to the qualitative, the end-point of which is his actualized divinity.

He who labours has a right to his full wages. But if a wage-earner does not become a miner of his inner resources also, he remains a deprived person, for he does not know that in his own heart there is gold buried. He is then exploited and tyrranized over by his lower self perhaps more than by society. The society which helps raise people's standard of living but does not bring this vital intimation to man is working for affluent destitution. Nothing is more horrifying than outer gloss and inner wretchedness. Progress which is not on a pilgrimage to the divinity of man is a moon-journey gone out of trajectory. Progressive society and declining people or regressive society and advancing individuals: neither of these holds the answer to the human problems.

Man must leave behind his instinct of self-fragmentation. He must learn to look

[5] Vide: *Śvetāśvatara* vi. 20.

upon himself as a whole that is non-separate from all.

What is not shared is not owned. And fulfilment is in giving more than in taking or receiving. There is no stranger here on earth. All are our very own. And we must own all. Partial owning will always lead to pain and misery.

What is needed is the matching of inner advancement with outer progress by controlling nature inner and outer, by being spiritual and scientific simultaneously.

The ancient thunder still reverberates in the sky of man's possibility. Man's technical knowledge needs to be educated by the voice of the thunder : 'Da', 'Da', 'Da'. We must hear this voice.

We read in the Upaniṣad:

> 'Prajāpati had three kinds of offspring: gods, men and demons. They lived with Prajāpati, practising the vows of *brahmacārins*. After finishing their term, the gods said to him: "Please instruct us, Sir." To them he uttered the syllable *da* (and asked): "Have you understood?" They replied: "We have. You said to us, 'Control yourselves (*dāmyata*).'" He said: "Yes, you have understood."
>
> 'Then the men said to him: "Please instruct us, Sir.' To them he uttered the same syllable *da* (and asked): "Have you understood?" They replied: "We have. You said to us, 'Give (*datta*)." He said: "Yes, you have understood."
>
> 'Then the demons said to him: "Please instruct us, Sir." To them he uttered the same syllable *da* (and asked): "Have you understood?" They replied: "We have. You said to us : 'Be compassionate (*dayadhvam*).'" He said: "Yes, you have understood."
>
> 'That very thing is repeated (even today) by the heavenly voice, in the form of thunder, as "Da", "Da", "Da", which means: "Control yourselves", "Give", and "Have compassion." Therefore one should learn these three: self-control, giving, and mercy.'[6]

These gods, men and demons who heard the teachings 'da', understood them differently, and went on their ways, have all come to nestle in every one of us, as three strains of being within us: divine, human and demoniac. Every individual needs to train himself through these three disciplines, in order to manifest his divinity. This not done, no amount of social, political or economic upheaval is going to open the avenues of self-fulfilment to all human beings in the world. Unrestrained, selfish and cruel men will corrupt even the noblest of systems and bring in floods of misery for all concerned. But when this is done, even through impossible situations men can move with an enlightened faith in search of self-fulfilment.

In all the future, with the accents of infinite love, *Prabuddha Bharata* will always continue to bring to man's hearing everywhere in the world, the voice of the thunder: Da, da, da.

Unless man's attained technological efficiency goes inseparably with his being self-controlled, charitable and compassionate, human civilization can never be sure of survival, much less of further progress. Therefore, the greatest need now, as always, is to awake to the most important value of existence—sanity, nay, spiritual consciousness.

The last and greatest blessing Sri Ramakrishna conferred on man was: May spiritual consciousness be awakened in you all. That summed up his life-work for the establishment of righteousness on earth.

His mandate to his chief disciple was that he should remove human miseries and bring knowledge to people. To this task Swami Vivekananda bent all his efforts. He brought *Prabuddha Bharata* into existence to work as an instrument for the fulfilment of this purpose.

To this glorious task *Prabuddha Bharata* will remain unflinchingly dedicated for all time.

---

6 Vide : *Bṛhadāraṇyaka,* V. ii. 1-3.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE FEET OF SRI GURUDEVA MY REFUGE

Kasi
10.2.1914

To the Most Beloved,
My Dearest Baburam* Maharaj,

I was very happy to receive your letter yesterday. Whenever I receive a letter from you and read it, I can hardly express what great joy I experience. I feel like rushing to your side to be soothed, but this wretched body stands in the way of that longing.

After returning from Prayag I have been feeling so weak in body that even a long walk becomes distressing. Every afternoon I was feeling slightly feverish. For the last two days I have had no fever. But there is plenty of weakness. I had thought that when Kedar Baba went to the Math (monastery) after Śivarātri I would also accompany him. But now I don't have enough courage to do so, and everybody is also forbidding me. So this time I shall have to remain satisfied with remembering you from here. Here, in your company, in what happiness our days used to pass! When will the Lord again graciously bring about that auspicious association? How many thoughts about the Lord would you then so kindly reawaken in our heart. The discussions that would then follow would soothe our very being. The Lord has been declaring through you the glory of His name. We feel blessed to hear this. Blessed is this age; blessed is His grace; blessed is His name!

Nripen Babu no longer takes any medicine, and by the Lord's grace he is keeping well without medicine. Through Nani, who came here, I have communicated to Nripen Babu the gist of your letter concerning him.

Mahapurush has not been keeping so well. He said he would write to you. Frank, being unwell here, went to Almora and is now keeping well.

Charu Babu has gone to Nepal for the *darśan* of Paśupatināth. That you are pleased with Gurudas will be of great good to him. Please continue to be kind towards me also—what else to write? My salutations and love to Maharaj. Please accept my salutations and love, and convey my cordial greetings and best wishes to every one at the Math. All others here are keeping well. Once again, please accept my salutations and love.

Your servant
Sri Hari

---

* Baburam was the first name of Swami Premananda prior to his *sannyāsa* (renunciation). Out of affection he continued to be called Baburam Maharaj informally. Like Swami Turiyananda he was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

A DUSKY PHILOSOPHER FROM INDIA

(FROM THE *CHRONICLE* OF SAN FRANCISCO, MARCH 18, 1900)

BLANCHE PARTINGTON

Had I been a little wiser or a little less wise—a little knowledge is a dangerous thing—it is possible that my prevailing sensation on meeting the Hindoo monk, Swami Vivekananda, would have been other than an irresistible inclination to get behind something or somebody for fear of my aura telling unkind tales of me.

These Eastern seers are such strange folk, and our auras we have always with us. That mine was radiating curiosity and 'nerves' and other undesirable original sins in every direction, I was painfully aware, but either the Swami, through knowledge, has come to charity, or else he is as comfortably unconscious of auras as the rest of us, for his greeting was gracious and kind as might be. Bowing very low, in Eastern fashion, on his entrance to the room, then holding out his hand in good American style, the dusky philosopher from the banks of the Ganges gave friendly greeting to the representative of that thoroughly Occidental institution, the daily press.

I couldn't see much of him at first, for his eyes, which are very large and brilliant, and black, of course, but I found afterward that he was taller than common, of much dignified grace of movement, and of a color calculated to make artists of fish wives. It made me dream of 'heathen idols, the temple bells a-ringing', of splendid mosques and bazaars, gold and ivory, bejeweled rajahs and elephants, and the whole gorgeous confusion of color which does duty for the foreigner's conception of that ancient rich land of India. And the Swami himself—a Buddha come to judgment! It is exactly the type. When he is not smiling, and the Swami is a humorous soul, there is the same suggestion of eternal inscrutableness in his face, the same suggestion of immutable poise in his figure. The repose of the Vere de Vere is not in it. One might, indeed, suggest that the quickest way of learning to be English would be to study manners in India! An undoubted addition to the Swami's striking picturesqueness is the wonderful red robe he wears. One cannot accuse a Swami of studying his complexion, yet the effect is identically the same as if the question had been studied with the utmost nicety, and I can confidently recommend a certain 'persimmonish' terra cotta to the advanced brunette—what price for the hint, ladies? Perhaps the Swami Vivekananda is not without the very smallest spice of the universal vanity. I asked for a picture to illustrate this article, and when someone handed me a certain 'cut' which has been extensively used in lecture advertisements here he uttered a mild protest against its use.

'But that does not look like you,' said I.

'No, it is as if I wished to kill someone,' he said smiling, 'like—like—' 'Othello,' I inserted rashly. But the little audience of friends only smiled as the Swami made laughing recognition of the absurd resemblance of the picture to the jealous Moor. But I do not use that picture.

'Is it true, Swami,' I asked, 'that, when you went home after lecturing in the Congress of Religions after the World's Fair, princes knelt at your feet, and a half dozen of the ruling sovereigns of India dragged

your carriage through the streets, as the papers told us? We do not treat our priests so.'

'That is not good to talk of,' said the Swami. 'But it is true that religion rules there, not dollars.'

'What about caste?'

'What of your Four Hundred?' he replied, smiling. 'Caste in India is an institution hardly explicable or intelligible to the Occidental mind. It is acknowledged to be an imperfect institution, but we do not recognize a superior social result from your attempts at class distinction. India is the only country which has so far succeeded in imposing a permanent caste upon her people, and we doubt if an exchange for Western superstitions and evils would be for her advantage.'

'But under such regime—where a man may not eat this nor drink that, nor marry the other—the freedom you teach would be impossible,' I ventured.

'It is impossible,' assented the Swami; 'but until India has outgrown the necessity for caste laws, caste laws will remain.'

'Is it true that you may not eat food cooked by a foreigner—unbeliever?' I asked.

'In India the cook—who is not called a servant—must be of the same or higher caste than those for whom the food is cooked, as it is considered that whatever a man touches is impressed by his personality, and food, with which a man builds up the body through which he expresses himself, is regarded as being liable to such impression. As to the foods we eat it is assumed that certain kinds of food nourish certain properties worthy of cultivation, and that others retard our spiritual growth. For instance, we do not kill to eat. Such food would be held to nourish the animal body, at the expense of the spiritual body, in which the soul is said to be clothed on its departure from this physical envelope, besides laying the sin of blood-guiltiness upon the butcher.'

'Ugh!' I exclaimed involuntarily, an awful vision of reproachful little lambs, little chicken ghosts, hovering cow spirits—I was always afraid of cows anyway—rising up before me.

'You see,' explained the Brahmin, 'the universe is all one, from the lowest insect to the highest Yogi. It is all one, we are all one; you and I are one—' Here the Occidental audience smiled, the unconscious monk chanting the oneness of things in Sanscrit and the consequent sin of taking any life.

It is weird and beautiful, like far-off echoes of some ancient oracle, to hear the deep and musical chant of Sanscrit scriptures, in which to vary the intoning of one syllable is a deadly sin. It falls from the monk's lips as dear and lovely poetry rises from a Western heart, and chant and translation, chant and translation, ring out their alternate music and truth through all his talk and teaching. He was pacing up and down the room most of the time during our talk, occasionally standing over the register—it was a chill morning for this child of the sun—and doing with grace and freedom whatever occurred to him, even, at length, smoking a little.

'You, yourself, have not yet attained supreme control over all desires,' I ventured. The Swami's frankness is infectious.

'No, madame,' and he smiled the broad and brilliant smile of a child; 'O I look it?' But the Swami, from the land of hasheesh and dreams, doubtless did not connect my query with its smoky origin.

'Is is [sic] usual among the Hindoo priesthood to marry?' I ventured again.

'It is a matter of individual choice,' replied this member of the Hindoo priesthood. 'One does not marry that he may not be in slavery to a woman and children, or permit the slavery of a woman to him.'

'But what is to become of the population?' urged the Anti-Malthusian.

'Are you so glad to have been born?' retorted the Eastern thinker, his large eyes flashing scorn. 'Can you conceive of nothing higher than this warring, hungry, ignorant world? Do not fear that you may be lost, though the sordid, miserable consciousness of the now may go. What worth having is gone?'

'The child comes crying into the world. Well may he cry! Why should we weep to leave it? Have you thought—' here the sunny smile came back—'of the different modes of East and West of expressing the passing away? We say of the dead man, "He gave up his body;" you put it, "he gave up the ghost". How can that be? Is it the dead body that permits the ghost to depart? What curious inversion of thought!'

'But, on the whole, Swami, you think it better to be comfortably dead than to be a living lion?' persisted the defender of populations.

'Svaha, Svaha, so be it!' shouted the monk.

'But how is it that under such philosophy men consent to live at all?'

'Because a man's own life is sacred as any other life, and one may not leave chapters unlearned,' returned the philosopher. 'Add power and diminish time, and the school days are shorter; as the learned professor can make the marble in twelve years which nature took centuries to form. It is all a question of time.'

'India, which has had this teaching so long, has not yet learned her lesson?'

'No, though she is perhaps nearer than any other country, in that she has learned to love mercy.'

'What of England in India?' I asked.

'But for English rule I could not be here now,' said the monk, 'though your lowest free-born American negro holds higher position in India politically than is mine. Brahmin and coolie, we are all "natives". But it is all right, in spite of the misunderstanding and oppression. England is the Tharma of India, attracted inevitably by some inherent weakness, past mistakes, but from her blood and fibre will come the new national hope for my countrymen. I am a loyal subject of the Empress of India!' and here the Swami salaamed before an imaginary potentate, bowing very low, perhaps too low for reverence.

'But such an apostle of freedom—' I murmured.

'She is a widow for many years and such we hold of high worth in India,' said the philosopher seriously. 'As to freedom, yes, I believe the goal of all development is freedom, law and order. There is more law and order in the grave than anywhere else—try it.'

'I must go,' I said, 'I have to catch a train.'

'That is like all Americans,' smiled the Swami, and I had a glimpse of all eternity in his utter restfulness. 'You must catch this car or that train always. Is there not another, later?'

But I did not attempt to explain the Occidental conception of the value of time to this child of the Orient, realizing its utter hopelessness and my own renegade sympathy. It must be delightful beyond measure to live in the land of 'time enough'. In the Orient there seems time to breathe, time to think, time to live; as the Swami says, what have we in exchange? We live in time; they in eternity.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MISSION IN THE WEST

SWAMI ATULANANDA

Swami Vivekananda, as you all know, was the foremost Indian monk of his time and a world-teacher destined to cleanse and stimulate the thought-atmosphere not only of his own country, but also of other lands.

When still a youth, he scorned a promising worldly career, and renouncing all earthly ties entered the sacred order of Sannyāsa. Endowed with a brilliant mind and a strong physique, filled with the monastic instinct, trained at the feet of one who, in intellect and spiritual realization, towered high above the keenest and loftiest minds of his time, Swami Vivekananda became the spokesman of India's highest culture and ideals, and of her passionate love for renunciation.

In speaking about Swami Vivekananda's influence in the West, we may pass over the first few months of his career in America, and locate him on the platform of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, where he made his first public appearance. It is true he had met many distinguished Americans before the Parliament began ; he had addressed small gatherings of interested persons ; he had spoken in the salons of cultured Americans ; but at the Religious Congress his real work commenced.

When Swami arrived in America, in July 1893, the great world's fair was already in progress. But the Religious Congress did not meet till September of the same year. It was then that he gave his first public speech, which was on the Religious Ideas of the Hindus.

Now, we must understand that the Parliament of Religions at Chicago was convened with a very definite object. That object presumably was to bring before the world a clear conception of what men of different climes, of different nations, of different beliefs held to be the highest aim in life. And then to compare notes, and to settle once for all the nettling question, which of the many religions professed by man should stand supreme, which belief would be entitled to proclaim itself paramount and best fitted as a universal religion. A lofty idea, no doubt. But there was no question in the western mind as to the outcome of the contest. And there were strange rumours abroad. These rumours, however, did not reach the ears of the masses.

The West, always confident, always cocksure of herself, convinced that she led the world in every field of accomplishment, convinced that her civilization, her culture, her customs, her ideals were the standard after which eastern races should model themselves, felt satisfied that in the year 1893, at Chicago, a conquest would be made which would silence, once for all, the feeble voice of all coloured races. The West was convinced that she would make the greatest of all her conquests, the conquest of religion.

Christianity, so hopelessly unsuccessful in the East before, would after that memorable day unfurl her banner in every land upon which the sun smiles. The doors would be opened for the missionaries, and the East would be Christianized. The one point on which the East had not yet submitted was her religion. It was the one rock on which the western sword had broken. All this would soon be changed. Submissive, on bent knees, the East would sit at the feet of the West to learn from her the message of peace and salvation. The Parliament of Religions was to bring the heathen to his senses.

But the gods smiled ; and the *ṛṣis* in

celestial spheres rejoiced. For they knew that at last the day had come when through the voice of one of their chosen children, East and West alike would hear the glad tidings of deliverance. And the East would listen, and the West would listen, and the glorious message of brotherly love and compassion would encircle the earth. For once again the command had sounded—and this time in the ears of Swami Vivekananda, the modern saint in India : 'Go ye out into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.'

And so the day drew near. The Chicago exhibition was opened, the gates were lifted, and people streamed in by the thousand to see the wonders of the world collected at Chicago. And then in September the Parliament of Religions commenced its sessions.

The West came well prepared. The occidental mind offered its best. Men of distinction, orators, men of learning, and high dignitaries of the different churches faced the vast assembly. And the audience was all-expectant..

The East was represented by men of different oriental faiths, men so dignified, in long robes and bright turbans. A pleasing picture.

'If only they were Christians', was the sentimental sigh of the church-ladies. But they were not Christians. Some of them were even idolaters. Terrible thought ! For little did they, who lamented the lot of these men, surmise that some of these brown-faced teachers had more of the Christ-spirit than they themselves possessed. And far was it from them to expect that there was a great surprise in store for that august assembly.

Many an occidental speaker unburdened his soul in eloquent speech, as one by one they rose on the platform. The audience listened with more or less patience and attention. But they wanted to hear these strange men from the East, who sat there like statues, apparently little moved by what went on before them.

There was one amongst these who had been singled out by the audience as the most striking figure. The West is not blind to beauty. Those brilliant eyes, that perfectly chiselled face, the erect and well-built frame—a majestic figure. This was Swami Vivekananda.

But what would his lips disclose, should once they open to speak ? What strange superstitious ideas would they reveal to the expectant audience ? They became impatient to hear him. Would he never rise ? It was past morning. They had sat there many hours. When would his turn come ?

A moment ! The Chairman moves, and bends in the Swami's direction. A few whispered words. At last the figure rises. The face is calm as an unruffled ocean. The eyes look far out into space. Is he inspired ?

A few steps forward, and Swami Vivekananda stands before his audience. There is pin-drop silence. One sweeping glance over the vast assembly, and the lips open : 'Sisters and Brothers of America !' In a sonorous voice, clear and distinct, the first words are spoken. And these words will go down in the history of religions.

An electric shock went through the audience. Here was inspiration indeed, a heart laying itself open before the world. Here, in half a sentence, the culture of an ancient race expressed itself. A world-soul had touched the finest, the noblest string of the human heart. The words were few, but the man stood revealed.

In an instant the Parliament of Religions had found itself. Its meaning, its object, its aim stood revealed in this one expression, 'Sisters and Brothers of America ! '

Glorious utterance ! The East had touched the West. Separating oceans dried up. The world stood united. For one

short moment at least, barriers dropped, colour of skin was forgotten, difference in attire was overlooked, peculiarity in manners did no longer count. Man stood face to face with man.

Another moment of silence. The lips open again. But who could sit there unmoved? Who could listen? The stirred up feeling was too overpowering, and it gave way in an outburst of enthusiastic applause.

Swami Vivekananda, the monk from distant India, was master of the situation. In five short words, he had formulated the ideas that half-consciously each one present had struggled to express. Swami Vivekananda, the prophet, had sounded the keynote to which the further progress of the Parliament was to be attuned.

Here was a master who had revealed man to man; who with one stroke had cleared the mental horizon; who had brought to the surface what is best and noblest in man, the recognition that we are all children of one Parent, of that very Parent whose blessings had been invoked at the opening of the session.

The rest of the story is known to all. How during the following sessions the people clamoured for a few words from the lips of the Hindu monk. And how they would sit patiently for hours to hear a few sentences from the sage of India.

And what a message he brought! For he always kept the standard high. The opening sentence was, as it were, the theme of which his following addresses were beautiful variations. Always impersonal, his message was for his Sisters and Brothers in America. And America then represented the world. For the Parliament of Religions was a World-Parliament.

Swami Vivekananda had come to Chicago to share with the world, to give freely to all humanity, that which it had taken him all his life to gather. He asked for no recognition, for no reward. He gave us what Jesus gave—the Bread of life, without price.

He started no sect, he initiated few disciples. He was contented to sow the seed, that all might reap the harvest. I do not ask you to become my followers, he said; I want to help you to become better men and better women. And he spoke from their own scriptures, and he spoke of their own Saviour. And from the Hindu scriptures he used what would illustrate and strengthen their own belief.

I have not come to make you Hindus, he said on another occasion; I have come to make you better Christians.

But he never tried to hide his own inheritance, that ancient culture, the accumulation of centuries of high thinking and right living, that culture which stands behind every sentence of even the oldest Hindu scriptures. And saturated as he was with the teachings of the sages of his own land, he would pour out story after story; he would quote *śloka* after *śloka* from Purāṇa and *śruti*. And this he would often do to explain and point out the beauty and poetry of their own Bible.

It was gracious; it was exceedingly generous. I do not wish to break down, he said; I want to erect and strengthen. I preach tolerance, for all religions contain truth.

And in his melodious voice he would chant in Sanskrit and then give in English that beautiful gem from the *Śiva-mahimnaḥ-stotra*: 'As different rivers, having their sources in different places, all mingle their waters in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'

And then from the *Gītā*: 'Whosoever comes to Me, through whatever form, I reach him. All men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me.'

Here was a message for the West—all

religions, when sincerely practised, lead to God! Different religions are so many paths that lead to Him! And before the minds of those present flitted dark pictures of the past. How in Europe man had slain man for religion's sake; how during the Inquisition thousands upon thousands of human beings, men and women of the same blood, had butchered each other in the name of God. Rack of torture, burning-pyre and guillotine had disappeared, but did not the rancour of religious strife still embitter many a human heart? Was not sect still opposed to sect? Roman Catholic against Protestant, Protestant against Roman Catholic? One denomination scorning the other?

Once again, light had come from the East. The light was now shining before them, and under the soothing influence of that benign light, it was brought home to this vast audience that they were all sisters and brothers, children of one heavenly Father, fellow-pilgrims on their way to God.

And of that heavenly Father, Swami Vivekananda spoke to the Christians of the West, and he explained how the same heavenly Father is worshipped in India, and how the Hindus also worship Him as the Divine Mother of the Universe. And then he went further and told that God is sometimes worshipped as the Divine Child, and even as the Beloved, the Divine Spouse. And then he told them of the final vision of the Yogis in *samādhi*. How in the solitude of the Himalayan forests these heroic men had meditated on the ultimate Truth, how they dared to penetrate deeper into the mysteries of Being, brushing aside all human visions till they stood face to face with the Absolute; and God was realized as He, who is the one life in a universe of death; as He who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world; as that One who is the only Soul of which all souls are but delusive manifestations.

Such revelations were startling. It was new in the West. But gradually the Swami won ground. And those who loved him and followed him, understood that he did not destroy, but that he led onward. For no hope was blasted, no vision scorned, no ideal knocked on the head. But there was guidance and advice and suggestion.

The spiritual child was lifted till it could stand; it was led by the hand till it could walk alone. Always the next signpost was pointed out. It is good to be born in a church, Swamiji said, but not to die there. Reach farther than churches can possibly take you. Have your own belief, but try to expand.

And so he pointed out how the belief in heaven, as held by the Christians, is but a halting-place on the way to *mukti* (liberation); how salvation is the stepping-stone on which to reach divine wisdom; how love for God must lead to realization of God; and how the personal God is but one aspect of Brahman.

And he spoke of Jesus, of Buddha, of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and sometimes of his own Master. He told the Christians that these were all alike Sons of God. This was the path by which Swamiji led his disciples. They were never the losers; they were always the gainers. For good they were shown the better; for the small the greater. It was an intellectual and spiritual expansion.

To say that eastern thought was entirely unknown in the West till the advent of Swami Vivekananda is not correct. Western scholars had given us some of the Hindu scriptures in our own language. But to very few was the teaching intelligible as it stood. It was therefore that we hailed Swami Vivekananda as the first authoritative exponent in the West of the ideas of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. His exposition was clear and comprehensible. It was masterly. He brought order out of

chaos. No mystery-mongering, he said; it weakens the brain. No secret societies. Religion must be open to all.

In the religion of the West, renunciation was hardly ever mentioned, much less practised. The word had held little meaning or no meaning to us till we met Swami Vivekananda. In Swamiji's life and teaching, renunciation was the great theme.

Hate this world, he said; it is a sore. Cultivate love for the spiritual life. And he quoted: 'Not by wealth, not by progeny, but by renunciation alone the good is reached.' Stand up for God, he said; let the world go. Have no compromise. Give up the world, then alone will you get free.

What a contrast with the teachings prevalent in the West at that time—the teaching of health, wealth and prosperity, that was gaining a footing in the West in those days! 'God is good. We are His children, so let us enjoy the good things of this world.' This was the rising religion in America.

These false ideas the Swami had to correct. He *had* to correct. He had to root them out. And he did it with a will. You people in the West have enjoyed enough, he said in California; now go to the jungle, dig a hole and meditate. Spit on this world if you want God. He took some of his students, and they lived and camped in the woods.

Now, he said, imagine that you are Yogis living in the Indian forest. Forget your cities, forget everything. Think only of God. See, he said, pointing to a stream flowing by, here is Mother Ganges.

And they lighted a *dhūnī* (ascetic's fire) and sat around it. The Swami taught them how to meditate and make *japam* (repetition of a sound symbol of God). Facing the stream he would shout: 'Hara, Hara, Vyom, Vyom! Hara, Hara, Vyom, Vyom!' till the sound vibrated in every mind, the world was forgotten, and the soul soared into regions unknown before.

Those who knew Swamiji, know how charming was his personality, how full of fun and wit he was. To camp out with him was a constant delight to his disciples. What a wealth of stories he would relate to them on moonlit evenings around the camp fire, under the beautiful pine trees of California. During these stories India would live before the mental eye of the students.

And so through hours of seriousness, and through hours of innocent enjoyment the students were drawn closer to God. In their hearts was lighted the fire of renunciation. To some of his hearers, especially to hidebound Church members, such remarks were shocking and 'they understood not the sayings which he spoke unto them.' But those who were really sincere 'kept all these sayings in their hearts'. To such there was food for thought. And the very startling effect of the words helped them to lift their minds out of the old rut of thinking.

Swamiji was a man of many moods. To judge him by any one of these moods or by one single saying is not doing him justice. Only those who were with him much could get a glimpse of his many-sided nature. For example, one day, he placed Christ after Buddha in regard to greatness as a man. Some Christians did not like it. But had they had a little patience, they would have heard how on another occasion he said of Jesus that he was an Incarnation of God. And these great incarnations, he said, are untouched by aught of earth. They assume our form and our limitations for a time in order to teach us. But in reality they are never limited. They are ever free.

I remember how one afternoon I came to the Vedanta Society in New York with a large picture of Jesus in my hand. The Swami asked me what I had there. I told him that it was a picture of the Christ, talking to the rich young man.

Oh, let me see it, he said eagerly. I

handed him the picture and never shall I forget the tenderness in his look when he held the picture and looked at it. At last he returned it to me with the simple words, How great was Jesus ! And I cannot help thinking that there was something in common between these two souls.

The doctrine of sin and eternal hell-fire is one of the doctrines on which orthodox Christian preachers love to harp. Man is born in sin, his nature is sinful. It is only through the grace of God that man can be saved. Now Swamiji used to hold question classes in New York and everyone was invited to ask any question he wished. So one evening, an old church-lady asked him why he never spoke of sin.

There came a look of surprise on Swamiji's face. But, madam, he said, blessed are my sins. Through sin I have learned virtue. It is my sins as much as my virtues that have made me what I am today. And now I am the preacher of virtue. Why do you dwell on the weak side of man's nature ? Don't you know the greatest blackguard often has some virtue that is wanting in the saint ? There is only one power, and that power manifests both as good and as evil. God and the devil are the same river with the water flowing in opposite directions.

The lady was shocked and horrified : but others understood.

And then the Swami began to speak of the Divinity that resides in every man ; how the soul is perfect, eternal and immortal ; how the Ātman resides in every being. And he quoted from the *Gītā* : 'Him the sword cannot cut, Him fire cannot burn, Him water cannot wet, Him wind cannot dry. Eternal, all-pervading, immortal is the soul of man.'

For those who are born in India it must be difficult to realize what all this meant to us in the West, to us who had shaped our lives under the terrible doctrines of the churches : that we are impotent, miserable creatures at the mercy of a whimsical, autocratic God, the sword of damnation always hanging over our heads, bondslaves at the mercy of a potentate to save or damn as He pleases.

Then came the strength-giving message of the Upaniṣads : Brahman alone is real ; everything else is unreal ; and the human soul is that Brahman, not different from it.

Here was hope ; here was strength. Every man is potentially divine. Realize it and be free.

What a consolation Swamiji's teachings were to those who had searched but had not found ! To those who had knocked but unto whom it had not been opened ! To them Swamiji came as a saviour. He came to the door of their own hearts and knocked—and blessed were they who opened the door to receive the flow of Benediction that came with his presence.

I shall not attempt to tell you what was Swami Vivekananda's mission in other directions ; what he has done for the land of his birth by waking up his own countrymen ; by presenting India to the world in her true garb ; by removing wrong impressions we in the West had about the Hindus ; by placing India where she belongs in the intellectual and spiritual world. Suffice it to give you my impressions of Swamiji in the West, as the bearer of light and wisdom, as the consoler of the heart, as the friend, the guide, the teacher of nations groping in spiritual darkness.

Not long ago I was asked by a Hindu friend of mine to state in a few words what was the mission of Swami Vivekananda. Now I do not believe in pigeon-holing men like Swamiji. It is utter silliness to attempt to explain his mission in one sentence. I replied rather hesitatingly that Swamiji came to enlighten the world.

'To enlighten the world ? ' my friend said with scorn : 'We have light enough.

Swamiji came to make men.' I could not deny it, for at once flashed through my mind Swamiji's own words : My religion is a man-making religion.

But now I think that both these answers are true, the one expressing Swamiji's mission to the East, the other his mission to the West. Yes, my friend was right. You in India have light abundant. Your scriptures are like the shining sun that dispels the darkness of ages. But remember, the sun was shining very dimly even in your own land until Swamiji removed the intervening clouds. You had turned your back towards the light, and you were looking at your own shadow. It was Swamiji who told you to turn around and face the light. Your gaze was directed westward. From the West you expected light and help and inspiration. Then Swamiji made it clear to you that not by imitating western life could India be raised but by turning towards your own scriptures. By studying the culture of your own Motherland, you would become men.

And as my friend remarked that there is light enough in India, that India needed men, so I might have retorted that we of the West had men and needed light. But are these the kind of men that Swamiji wanted ? Yes, muscles of iron and nerves of steel the West has. A good deal of brain even. Swamiji would not have told us in the West that by playing football we should be better able to understand the *Gītā*. Strength there is, indomitable willpower, perserverance, courage, integrity. Who will deny it ? But was that all that Swamiji wanted of a man ?

Brute force we find abundant in the West. But how is that force applied ? Is it used as a medium to elevate us above brute creation ? Has it made us real men ? That is the question. Do we use that strength as a foundation on which to raise a noble, refined character ; as a basis on which the higher, the moral, the spiritual man takes his stand ?

Swamiji wanted men, not brutes. He wanted man, the highest product of evolution ; man, the master of his lower nature, the king of creation.

And what did Swamiji mean by strength? Strength ! Strength ! I have only taught strength ! he exclaimed when questioned about his work.

But what kind of strength ? Do you remember how he would repeat again and again Śrī Kṛṣṇa's admonition to Arjuna ? When the latter, in a moment of mental confusion, dropped bow and arrow and sank down in his chariot, overcome by grief, Kṛṣṇa exclaimed : 'Whence this weakness ? At critical moments to fall back and shrink from one's duty is mean ! It does not befit thee, Arjuna. Stand up, and acquit thee like a man !'

Swamiji wanted that kind of strength. Strength that leads to the conscientious performance of *dharma,* be it in social functions or in a life of withdrawal from worldly affairs. Renunciation, we were taught, must be the backbone of our life, in the world as well as in solitude.

In the West, we had had enough of worldly activity. So in London Swamiji told his disciples : What the world wants today is twenty men and women who can dare to stand in the street yonder and say that they possess nothing but God ! What the world wants is character, men of burning selfless love. Remember, man is the highest being that exists. MAN IS GOD—but that man must be pure and strong and selfless, and stripped of worldly ambitions.

Religion is for the strong ! he declared again and again : Be brave ! Be strong ! Once you have taken up the spiritual life, fight ! Fight, as long as there is any life left in you ! Even though you know that you are going to be killed, fight till you are

killed ! Die fighting. Don't go down till you are knocked down !

Then with his right hand extended, he thundered : Die game ! Die game ! Die game ! These were his farewell words to his disciples in California—his goodbye.

That was what Swamiji wanted of his disciples. The demand was high, but he could not be satisfied with anything less. His burning love for God and Truth, his absolute selflessness, his love and sympathy for high and low alike, are what made Swamiji so dear to his western disciples.

They felt instinctively that it was his own heart that spoke when he quoted an ancient *ṛṣi* : 'Hear, ye children of immortal bliss ! even ye that dwell in higher spheres ! For I have found that ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion. And knowing Him, ye also shall be saved from death.'

Then Swamiji departed. He left for distant shores. But his voice seemed to linger behind. In hours of solitude, when the heart felt sad and longed for one look, for one word from the beloved but departed Master, that voice seemed to speak and whisper : Go within ; all knowledge is there. Hearest thou not ? In thine own heart, day and night goes on that eternal song, '*Saccidānanda* ; *Śivo'ham, Śivo'ham*' ('Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute ; I am Śiva, I am Śiva').

Now, as we look back and reflect what heritage Swami Vivekananda has left to the West, we would point, first of all, to those who were his disciples, those living monuments chiselled by his own hands, men and women always ready to testify to the debt they owe to their Master. We would point to the men and women he has made, men and women ready to live and die for him.

We would point to the lives he has changed, to those whom he has brought to the feet of his own divine Master.

We would point to his brother *sannyāsins* (monks) now spreading his message in foreign lands.

And then we would point to that encyclopaedia of spiritual wealth, his lectures and writings now printed and widely circulated all over the world in different languages. Through these scriptures, his voice may still be heard. Through them his spirit is still working. To these scriptures for ages to come, East and West alike will look for light and guidance.

We would point, too, to the Vedanta societies now flourishing in America.

And now, if you ask what made Swami Vivekananda so wonderfully successful in the West, we would answer that it was his eloquence, the logic of his arguments, his wonderful personality and, most of all, his spotless life and character. It was the combination of heart and intellect that made Swamiji the power that he was.

His mission in the West, I take it, was to give to Christians a higher interpretation of their own scriptures ; to give to unbelievers a sound foundation for serious investigation ; to guide the scientific mind into channels of higher research ; to point out to western nations the danger of a materialistic civilization ; and to show to all men and women the way how to realize their own divinity. And this he did by placing before us and by explaining to us the treasures of the Vedas.

In fulfilling his mission, Swami Vivekananda has placed all western nations under eternal obligations to India.



THE MOON MISSION

Through the ages the moon has been a stimulator of deep human urges—love and tenderness, wonderment and inspiration. The rustic and the philosopher, the lover and the poet, the scientist and the militarist—all have been attracted by it, each in terms of his own needs. But to one person, however, the moon had a special message; it became the shining symbol of inner personal purity, leading the aspirant on to a high adventure of the spirit.

This voyager of 'inner-space' was Sarada Devi, known as the Holy Mother, the immaculate wife of Sri Ramakrishna. How did the moon inspire her? Her own words give the answer: 'Ah! The ecstasy of those days! On moonlit nights I would look at the moon and pray with folded hands, "May my heart be as pure as the rays of yonder moon!" "O Lord, there is a stain even in the moon; but let there not be in my mind even the least trace of any stain."'

To her, Ramakrishna was husband, *guru* and God in one, the unique focus of her life, thought and emotions. True to this relation he imparted to her wisdom and training not only in domestic duties but also in spiritual striving. One special mind-expanding idea which he gave to her, in his own homely way, was about God being the God of all, belonging to all: 'The moon is addressed as "uncle moon" by all children. So also God is "uncle", the common property of all. Every one has a right to call on Him.' This made a deep impression on her and later on became a guiding force in her life.

Due to various circumstances, the only opportunity Sarada got to be in the company of her beloved but God-intoxicated husband was while serving his food, an opportunity which she greatly cherished. One day, as she was about to take the lunch-tray in, near the door of the Master's room there was standing a lady who eagerly came forward and pleaded that she might be allowed to carry the tray to the room. The Holy Mother gladly consented. But later, during the meal, the Master started complaining that he found it difficult to take the food. His delicate system had become allergic to impure persons; he could not take food touched by them. Did not the Holy Mother know that this particular woman was one such? Sarada admitted she knew but appealed to him, 'Please somehow manage to take the food today.' On his part Ramakrishna wanted her to give the assurance that in future at least there would be no recurrence of the happening, that she would never hand over the food to others. But to

this Sarada would not agree. Most humbly but equally firmly she submitted, 'That I cannot do; for if some one comes to me and makes request, how can I refuse? However, I shall try my best to bring the food myself.'

Uncle moon belongs to all, and by the same token God-man Ramakrishna too belonged to all! How could she think of monopolizing his service? No doubt, he was to her the nearest and dearest, the most precious treasure; yet her mind, purer than the 'moon', was free from any idea of petty possessiveness. Let others, if they so wished, also share the precious privilege.

At once Ramakrishna understood, recognized her nobility and left the matter there.

It is no wonder that before he passed away, he chose her to continue his spiritual ministry, passing on the mantle of the *guru* to this specially worthy, though reluctant, successor. And the result was that in turn, Sarada Devi became 'uncle moon' or rather 'mother moon' to all those who came to her as seekers, without distinction of high or low. To this 'mother moon' all belonged, all were beloved children—the saint and the sinner, monk and householder, man and woman.

'My child!' she confided to one person, 'Several among those who come here are up to anything in life. No type of sin has been left undone by them. But when they come here and address me as "mother", I forget everything and they get more than they deserve.'

An all-embracing compassion was the main-spring of this self-acknowledged mission: 'We are born for this purpose. If *we* do not accept the sins and sorrows of others and assimilate them, who else will do so?'

The perfect love of the Heavenly Father, in the words of Jesus, makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust. The same Heavenly Father inspired this 'Mother moon' to shed her cool, soothing rays and shower her grace on all those scorched by the miseries and evils of the world.

And the priceless heritage which this spotless 'mother moon' left for her beloved children was the message of immaculate purity. 'See pure; be pure!' has been her ultimate message to those who hanker for peace. 'If you want peace of mind, don't look out for faults in others. Rather look to your own. Strive to make the whole world your own. For, in truth, none is a stranger in this world; all the world is truly your own!'

EXPLORER

Source:

Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother by Swami Tapasyananda.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—THE JOURNALIST

PROF. SANKARI PRASAD BASU

It would seem a little surprising that Swami Vivekananda, the spiritual leader of modern India and the world, was at the same time a 'journalist'. The attributes which we normally associate with journalism are not supposed to be compatible with spirituality. A spiritual person worships Truth and God, whereas a journalist worships news which is, very often made for serving some purpose. Needless to say, if Vivekananda is a journalist he must be one of Truth itself, which in fact was his very life. The journals he founded and conducted on social level had perhaps for the first time in history, the rare privilege of being directly served by a man of God, a prophet. This happened according to the need of the times—the modern era could not get along without journalism. Our times needed the inspiration of a prophet-journalist. Swami Vivekananda fulfilled this need of our journalistic age.

The reader is at liberty to take this fact lightly or in all seriousness, but no one will ever be able to wipe off from the pages of history the fact that Vivekananda was the founder of three periodicals in India, which, even during his own lifetime, acquired tremendous distinction within the short span of a few years.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly the time when Swamiji first conceived in his mind an idea to publish journals. But it can be said that from the time he resolved to preach Sri Ramakrishna's life and message, he must have begun to think of periodicals as vehicles of preaching. His childhood was spent in an age of religious and reform movements rising all over India. He saw with his own eyes how significant an impetus contemporary journals and dailies gave to those movements. And again, he saw what emptiness sometimes lurked beneath that kind of journalism. The journals were very often full of empty verbosity and harmful foreign ideas. 'Truth' and 'strength'—which, to Swamiji, were two watchwords for regeneration of man—often found no place on their pages.

Even when Naren had not become Vivekananda he had evinced an interest in journalism—a fact which is evidenced in Naren's giving inspiration to Upendranath Mukhopadhyaya, a household devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, regarding the publication of journals. Upendranath ventured upon a publication business during Sri Ramakrishna's lifetime. It is said that Sri Ramakrishna once told someone, 'Naren will lecture and Upen will run a printing-press.'

Narendranath encouraged Upendranath, who was then a poor bookseller, to publish journals, and helped him in many ways, even giving business guidance. Most of the journals of Bengal in those days were controlled by the reformists, and as such were dominated by sectarian narrowness. They could hardly represent Indian culture in its wholeness. It was to remove these difficulties that Upendranath had started, in 1889, a journal named *Sahitya-Kalpadruma*, which began to be edited within just a few months of its inception, by the well-known *littérateur*-journalist, Sureshchandra Samajpati. (The name of this journal was subsequently changed to *Sahitya*. It acquired a significant place in the cultural life of Bengal.)

Sureshchandra has shown us, by quoting an eminent journalist of the day, Sri Hemendraprasad Ghosh, that the chief inspiration behind *Sahitya-Kalpadruma* was none other than Narendranath. Mr. Ghosh writes :

> 'When Vivekananda repeatedly encouraged Upendranath, his brother-disciple, to publish a newspaper, Upendranath only replied, "I don't have the courage." That was a period of preparation for Upendranath as a rising publisher. Gradually he began to publish more than one newspaper, which, for many reasons, had to be discontinued later on. Finally emerged the well-known journal '*Basumati.*'

It may be mentioned here that young Narendranath had written a translation of *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, which was published in five consecutive numbers of *Sahitya-Kalpadruma,* beginning from the very first issue.

All these things happened in the pre-Vivekananda period of Narendranath's life. Soon the unrecognized youth Narendranath became the world-figure Vivekananda, preaching Vedanta in America. It was during this period, in August 1896, on the eve of Vivekananda's return to India, that Upendranath began publication of the weekly *Basumati.* The journal accepted as its life-principle a new motto, *Namo Nārāyaṇāya,* (salutation to the supreme being in man) which was derived from the message of Vivekananda himself.

It has already been said that Upendranath was a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and a friend of Vivekananda; and the contribution of *Basumati* to the dissemination of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideas has been large enough. Yet a journal like this, published primarily with the business motive of Upendranath, could never have been an ideal mouth-piece for Vivekananda. And again, a journal which was to be a vehicle of Swamiji's universal and Vedantic ideas could hardly achieve its end if published in the medium of the Bengali language alone.

Soon after his appearance on the world-stage, Swamiji particularly felt the need of journal-publication, firstly in order to preach Truth, and secondly to resist falsehood. Just as Swamiji had received an overwhelming reception from various journals and newspapers, similarly, and even more, he saw in currency attempts to distort his views and discredit his character. He also realized that newspapers that had lent their support to him, would only continue to do so as long as they could find his mission aggreable to their own purpose. In case of divergence of opinion, if one wanted to retain the support of papers, one would have to compromise the independence of one's views. To do any such thing would have been inconceivable for a man like Vivekananda. Swamiji had also realized that the enthusiasm that arose in India as a result of his phenomenal success in America, if this were not to be reduced to mere songs of adoration, then this enthusiasm must be canalized in a definite direction. It was for this reason that he felt the need of an organization, and that of an organ as its mouth-piece.

During his stay in America, when Vivekananda first took an active interest in the publication of a journal, the first face that flashed in his mind was that of Alasinga Perumal. A blessed soul indeed! Alasinga occupies an important place in the annals of the Ramakrishna movement. It was he who was the pioneer in sending Vivekananda to the West; and later he was to be chosen by Swamiji himself as the organizer-editor of the first Vedanta journal in modern India. Like his master Vivekananda, Alasinga too had felt the need of a journal and wrote to Swamiji about this. In spite of accepting the soundness of Alasinga's intention, Swamiji laid stress, *in the beginning,* more on the value of selfless service. In an inspiring letter dated May 28, 1894 he wrote to Alasinga: 'Printing magazines, papers, etc., are good, no doubt, but actual work, my boys, even if infinitesimal, is better than eternal scribbling and talking.' (*Complete Works,* 1963, Vol. V,

p. 35. This work hereafter referred to as C.W.)

But a few months after this we find Swamiji giving directions to Alasinga regarding the publication of a journal. The reason for this change in attitude, we may guess, is probably because Swamiji understood that Alasinga was not the type of person suited to the new idea of selfless service he envisaged. Alasinga was interested more in the 'preaching' aspect of religion—and was able to put forth great energy in that direction. Organizing seminars, fostering public relations and publishing books and journals—these were the activities nearest to his heart.[1]

Swamiji soon discovered the literary temperament and inclinations of Alasinga, and engaged him in that very field, to which Alasinga dedicated himself until his last breath.

As far as we know, it was as early as 11 July 1894 that Swamiji first gave Alasinga his approval for the publication of a journal. In the letter of 11 July 1894 he writes to Alasinga :

'Start the journal and I will send you articles from time to time.... I shall try to send you money from time to time to publish paper etc.... What about Madras magazine ? ... Make Kidi write on.'

From the text of the letter it is not difficult to see that discussions regarding the publication of a journal had been going on for a considerable period before this date. Yet it was more than a year after this letter that the journal was actually published. In this intervening period Swamiji had infused much inspiration and given many a reminder in a number of letters.[2]

From these letters we know that Swamiji wanted to establish a society and to publish a journal that would serve as its mouthpiece. He gave detailed instructions as to how he would send money and in what amount, what would be the principles on which the journal should be run, and even how to get subscribers. It can be seen that Swamiji took upon himself almost the entire financial responsibility. It was with his approval that the journal had been named *Brahmavadin* and its motto : *'Ekam sat*

[1] From the scanty information available to us about Alasinga's life we know that Alasinga was born in 1865 at Chigmagalore, Mysore.

His father Narasimhacharya, though not rich, was high-born, belonging to the Sree Vaiṣṇavite sect. Alasinga had his education from Madras Presidency College and Madras Christian College. In 1884 he received a degree in science. Further study not being possible due to financial difficulties, Alasinga took to the job of school-teaching. In this capacity he showed such efficiency that soon he was offered the post of head master at Pachaiappa's High School at Madras, a post which he held to the end of his life. Shortly before his death, he also taught physics and chemistry in Pachaiappa's College.

The preaching against Hindu religion by Christian missionaries used to pain Alasinga. His brother-in-law was the famous Sanskrit scholar, Rai Bahadur Prof. S. Rangacharya, and his uncle the famous Vaiṣṇavite scholar, Yogī Parthasarathi Ayyangar, who was associated with the Hindu League in America. It was he who first informed Alasinga about the Parliament of Religions to be held at Chicago in America. Alasinga was searching for the man to represent Hinduism in the Parliament. After he had met Vivekananda he realized at once that Vivekananda was much more than an ordinary man: he was appointed by God. Alasinga had a circle of educated friends much interested in religion; they always sought to exchange views and discuss religion. He was also intimately acquainted with Annie Besant.

Besides the *Brahmavadin* Alasinga was also associated with the journal named *India,* which was published by Thirumalacharya, an extremist in politics. He took sympathetic interest in this paper, and for its advancement he had brought the celebrated Tamil poet Subrahmanya Bharati from the journal *Swadesa-Mitran,* to which Mr. Bharati had been previously attached.

[2] Letters dated 31 August 1894; 29 September 1894; in another undated letter of the same year; 6 may 1895; 28 May 1895; 1 July 1895; 30 July 1895, etc.

viprā bahudhā vadanti'—'Truth is one; sages call it by various names.' 'Prabuddha Bharata',[3] the name for the proposed society, was also chosen by Swamiji himself.

We can also see that Swamiji thought not of periodicals only, but also pressed for the publication of newspapers. Regarding the journal Swamiji had no end of anxiety. Through his letters he had given the maximum possible instructions that could be conveyed through letter, as to what kind of articles should be printed, what should be the style of composition, and who should be the writers. For its first number he sent an article. But the journal could not be published as speedily as Swamiji had wished, and the delay made him much annoyed, even angry. When the journal was actually published, and he was sent a copy, Swamiji, despite his expression of joy, was not too full of praise, for that might be a hindrance to its further advancement. Afterwards in many of his letters we find Swamiji's detailed criticism of the journal, his sharp eye regarding its every minute detail, which was confined not only within the seriousness of its subject-matter, but extended to the printing of its cover. Swamiji's deep aesthetic sense could hardly stand anything gross in matters of art and the cover-design of the *Brahmavadin* was anything but highly artistic. Even in matters of advertisement Swamiji was critical! 'Advertisement runs the paper', he said.

About the get-up of the paper and its maintenance Swamiji was rather tempered, even affectionate, in his critical views; but regarding the fundamental principles of the journal he was absolutely uncompromising. The *Brahmavadin* was a journal of Vedanta. In Swamiji's opinion the secret esotericism of Theosophy was something antagonistic to the Truth of Vedanta; for this reason he was against any compromise with Theosophy. That is why, when he noticed the

[3] A portion of the prospectus of the *Brahmavadin*, which was published in various papers is quoted here from the Indian Mirror of 27 July 1895, in the following:

'Under the advice and with the encouragement of Swami Vivekananda, it is proposed to start a weekly journal to be named the *Brahmavadin*. The main object of the journal is to propagate the principles of the Vedantic religion of India, and to work towards the improvement of the social and moral conditions of man by steadily holding aloft the sublime and universal ideal of Hinduism. The power of any ideal in filling human hearts with inspiration and the love of the good and the beautiful, is dependent on how high and pure it is; and it shall be the endeavour of the *Brahmavadin* to portray the Hindu ideal in the best and truest light in which it is found recorded in the historical sacred literature of the Hindus. Mindful of the fact that between the ideal of the Hindu Scriptures and the practical life of the Hindu people, there is a wide gulf of separation, the proposed new journal will constantly have in view how best to try to bridge that gulf, and make the social and religious institutions of the country accord more and more with the spirit of that lofty divine ideal....

'The New India of to-day is, in many respects, far different from the old India of centuries ago, and all our old institutions have to get themselves re-adjusted, so as to be in consonance with the altered conditions of modern life. For this purpose, it is highly necessary to see that the Hindu religion is more than ever earnestly engaged in the service of man in this ancient land of ours, wherein the sacred light from above has shone always on suffering humanity, offering guidance, and the consolation of immortal bliss. As Hinduism believes in the gradual evolution of human perfection and in the harmony of religions, the *Brahmavadin* shall have no quarrel with other religions, but shall always try to do its best to uphold the work of strengthening and ennobling man, under the banner of whatsoever religion such work may be accomplished. All truth is one, and must be perfectly concordant, and the only thing that any religion has to hate is vice....

Yours, &c.,

G. VENKATARANGA ROW, M.A. M.C., NANJUNDA ROW, B.A., M.B. & C.M,; M. C. ALASINGA PERUMAL, B.A.

Triplicane, Madras, the 15th July, 1895.

penetration of Theosophical ideas in some numbers of the *Brahmavadin,* he could not remain silent, but criticized the treachery in hard language. As a result of this severe criticism Alasinga felt extremely ashamed and let his *guru* know through personal letters as well as through the journal itself that the *Brahmavadin* had not given up Vedanta.[4] At the same time he also offered, obviously with a deep sense of regret, to hand over the responsibility of the journal to a committee. Swamiji, too, was repentant for there was no end of his love for Alasinga. He therefore earnestly requested his disciple to continue as the proprietor and director of the journal.

Swamiji's help, support, and inspiration, and Alasinga's back-breaking labours, made possible the successful publication of the *Brahmavadin* so long as Alasinga was alive. Within a few years of Alasinga's death its publication came to a stop. Financially, the journal was never very successful. It was sustained more by its life-giving ideas. A small portion of the history of the tremendous struggle through which the journal had to steer its course is available to us from many a clue strewn over the pages of Vivekananda's letters. Today, after nearly three-quarters of a century, we do not need to unearth this history. But one thing we must not fail to recognize, that despite all these struggles that went on behind the scenes, the *Brahmavadin* did not turn to the world a darkened face, but had always shown an illumined face dispelling all sorrows. The value of the journal was appreciated in many quarters of the contemporary cultural life of India; and in this connection many recalled time and again the two unforgettable names—Vivekananda and Alasinga.

On the eve of the first publication of the *Brahmavadin,* the *Indian Mirror* (27 July 1895) hailed with joy the coming journal:

> 'A new era of religious thought and aspiration is dawning everywhere, and it is hoped that *Brahmavadin* in its catholicity and non-sectarian spirit will be in accord with the spirit of the age.'

To what extent the *Brahmavadin* fulfilled the hopes entertained by the *Indian Mirror* of 22 July 1895 is shown in an obituary of Alasinga which appeared in the well-known Anglo-Indian evening-daily *Madras Mail*:

> 'He (Alasinga) was also instrumental, with the literary help of the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission in establishing the *Brahmavadin, the first and foremost*

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4 It was probably to appease Vivekananda that Alasinga printed in the 15 February number of the *Brahmavadin* a letter from Kripananda, which revealed the deplorable plight of Theosophical esotericism in America. The letter was printed without Swamiji's knowledge, and he did not approve of the publication of a letter full of such vilification.

In the 14 March number of the *Brahmavadin* was printed another letter, this time from Max Müller, in which the latter sharply commented on its abrupt turn towards Theosophy: 'I have read with great pleasure the numbers of the *Brahmavadin,* which you have kindly sent me. What I like is the spirit of pure Hinduism, more particularly Vedantism, unadulterated by so-called Theosophy.'

Below this letter there was a reaffirmation of the *Brahmavadin's* ideal, which was in all probability primarily meant for Swamiji and not for Max Müller: 'We heartily thank the Professor (Max Müller) for the advice he has given us and wish to assure him that, although we have no kind of quarrel with the "so-called Theosophy" and the Theosophists, we find both it and them to be too occult for our understanding. It is our declared policy to "propagate the spirit of Hinduism" in open daylight without any resort to the more or less dark shadows of occultism and mystic magnetism; and in the editorial columns of the very first number of the *Brahmavadin* may be found the following statement of our view in regard to the matter—"the sublime rationality of the Vedanta can allow the roughest handling of it, without the slightest injury to itself, and although it is sometimes spoken of as *Rahasya, Guhya,* as something secret or hidden, it stands in no need of mystic justification."'

Indian journal conducted in English, devoted to the exposition of Vedanta philosophy and to recording the progress of the Ramakrishna Movement, in various parts of the world.' [5] (italicized by the author).

We have already seen that although the *Brahmavadin* was published with Swamiji's own financial assistance and direct inspiration, Alasinga had always remained its proprietor, by Swamiji's direction. Many of Swamiji's speeches and writings were published in this journal, and often it printed profuse information about the Ramakrishna movement. But the *Brahmavadin* was not the organ of the Ramakrishna Mission. The Mission's own mouth-piece came into being subsequently during Swamiji's life-time. Even then, the *Brahmavadin* was never deprived of Swamiji's assistance and blessings. The report published in the *Brahmavadin*, November 1910, on its relation with Swamiji, is a crucial one. We are going to close this section by quoting this report :

> 'It (The Brahmavadin) sprang into being under the breath of the late lamented Swami Vivekananda. For five years it derived sustenance and nourishment from his loving hands, and fared like a *Raja*. During the next period of its apprenticeship and service as *Dasa*—a period of ten long eventful years—it has had much ado in trying to save itself from extinction. . . . The journal has all along endeavoured to be faithful to the high ideal with which the late Master inspired it, and has not willingly done aught that is in any way calculated to lower that ideal.'

II

When the *Brahmavadin* was only ten months old, another monthly journal, *Prabuddha Bharata*, began to be published in English from Madras by Swamiji's devotees. It may seem that the rise of this second journal was due to some idealistic schism among the Vivekanandists ; but that was not the case. It was, again, with Swamiji's inspiration that its publication started, and Alasinga, the editor of the *Brahmavadin*, was among its organizers. In an essay published in *Prabuddha Bharata*, August 1947, M. G. Srinivasan has claimed for Alasinga the chief role in running this journal too :

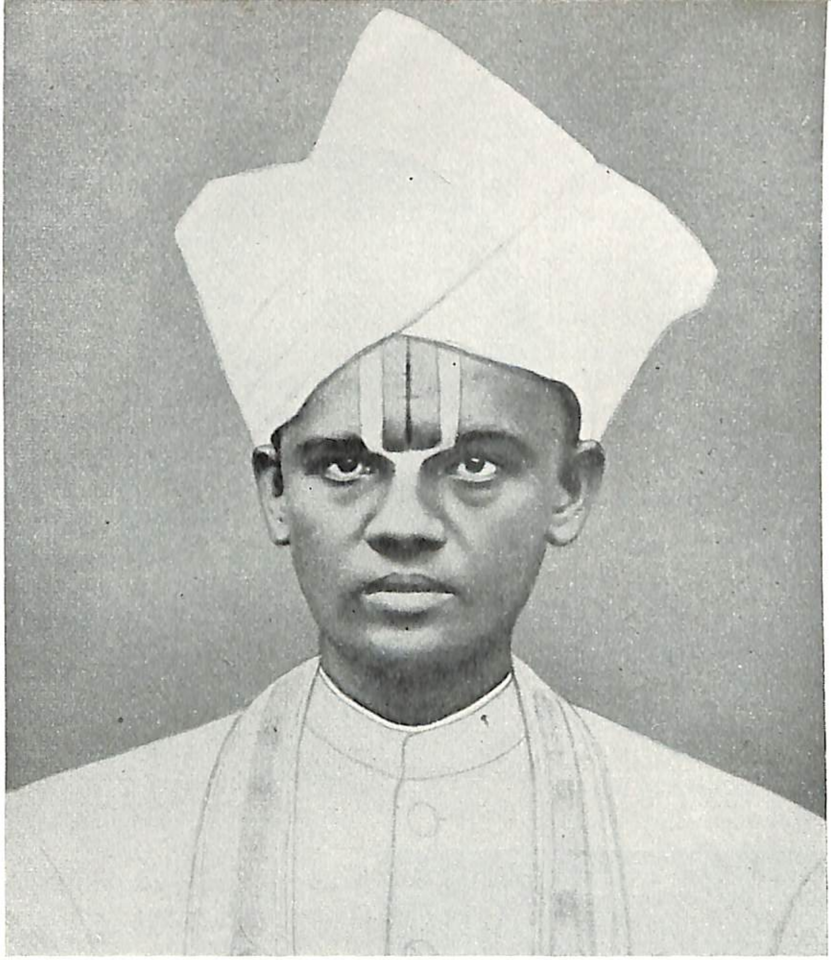
> 'The *Prabuddha Bharata* also owes its origin to Alasinga. It was he who first proposed that as the *Brahmavadin* was of more advanced standard, generally suitable to Vedantic scholars and elderly persons, another journal in English should be started for the benefit of youths and less educated persons containing simpler and less scholarly contri-

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[5] Another brief comment on the *Brahmavadin* is also available to us in the high appreciation that the Madras daily, *The Hindu*, had given on Alasinga for his dedicated service to Swamiji's ideal :

'Very soon after Swami Vivekananda began his famous career as a modern exponent of the Vedanta, he felt the necessity for starting a religious journal in English with a view to present to the European and American world Hinduism in its most rational and universal aspect. He suggested the idea to Mr. Alasinga Perumal who took up the work most promptly and with the ready co-operation of a large number of his cultured Indian friends started the journal in the year 1895, giving to it on the suggestion of the Swami himself the characteristic name of the *Brahmavadin*. This journal is now going through the 15th year of its life and it bears testimony to his unflagging zeal and high purpose in carrying on the work which he undertook out of his love and devotion to Swami Vivekananda.' (Quoted from *Brahmavadin*, May 1909.)

Max Müller, one of the greatest Vedanta Scholars, praised the *Brahmavadin*. There was also a proposal that a collection of selected essays from the *Brahmavadin* should be published. On being requested, Max Müller sent a preface for the book. (Unfortunately it was never published.) In the preface he said that he had gone through most of the essays published in the *Brahmavadin*, and that they had successfully expressed the extraordinary strength-giving truths of Vedanta.



ALASINGA PERUMAL

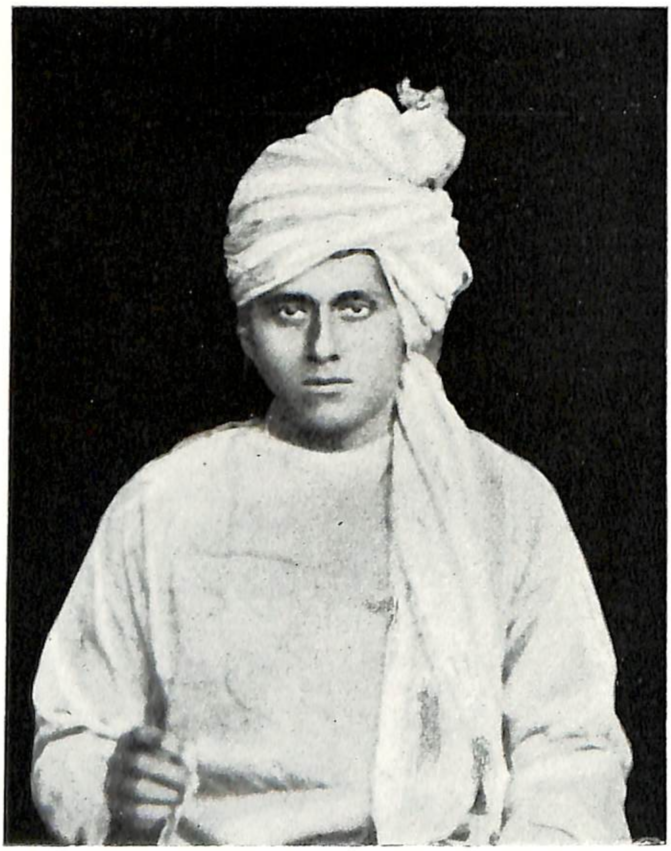


Seated in the centre :
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Seated on ground :
(4th from left) :
DR. NANJUNDA RAO



B. R. RAJAM IYER
First Editor of
Prabuddha Bharata



SWAMI SWARUPANANDA
First President of
Advaita Ashrama

butions. It was Alasinga who selected B. R. Rajam Iyer as the first editor of *Prabuddha Bharata,* which was started in the year 1896 through the joint efforts of Alasinga, Dr. Nanjunda Rao and G. G. Narasimhachar.'

There can be little doubt about the truth of Mr. Srinivasan's statement; for, we see Swamiji expressing his disapproval, in more than one letter, of the abstruseness of the *Brahmavadin*'s essays and editorials. These philosophical articles, written in a highly scholastic style, were not suitable vehicles for carrying the message of Vedanta to everyone's door. On the other hand, any attempt to simplify these weighty philosophical discussions, would run the danger of diminishing the *Brahmavadin*'s good name in scholastic circles. In such a situation the idea of a second journal did arise, and it might have arisen in Alasinga's mind also.

But we have no exact contemporary evidence to show that it was only Alasinga who had thought about the second journal. Rather, it appears from Swamiji's letters that Dr. Nanjunda Rao took the initiative in this matter; with him Alasinga might have been associated.

In a letter dated 14 April 1896 we find Swamiji first mentioning his plans for this new journal. From New York he wrote to Dr. Nanjunda Rao:

> 'I have every sympathy with your proposed magazine for boys, and will do my best to help it on. You ought to make it independent, following the same lines as the *Brahmavadin,* only making the style and matter much more popular.... Avoid all attempts to make the journal scholarly.... Don't make it metaphysical at all.... As to the business part, keep it wholly in your hands, "too many cooks spoil the broth".'

It is evident from this letter that Swamiji put the responsibility of this paper on Dr. Nanjunda Rao, just as Alasinga was given the responsibility of the *Brahmavadin.* We also see Swamiji clearly distinguishing here the characteristic features of the proposed journal from those of the *Brahmavadin.* He spoke (in the same letter) of 'those wonderful stories scattered all over the Sanskrit literature, to be re-written and made popular', which would be one of the aims of the journal. He assured the organizers, in more than one letter, that he would personally help in this matter; but being overwhelmingly busy in the midst of multifarious activities, Swamiji was not able to do so.[6] But many of Vivekananda's best lectures and writings were published in this journal, and they became its glory for ever.

In the concluding portion of Swamiji's letter of 14 April 1896, we find him making it clear that the 'help' he promised for the journal was not to be financial. At the same time he also said that he would try to procure donors able to offer financial assistance. If Swamiji had not really given any financial help to the journal, the reason for this was that he had not the means at that time to do so. Every reader of Swamiji's life knows that during the last phase of Swamiji's stay in America, he would teach eager students in the Indian style without any charge whatsoever, as a result of which the funds that he had collected earlier became exhausted in pursuance of various projects fixed earlier.

The chief organizer of *Prabuddha Bharata,* Dr. Nanjunda Rao, was a famous physician of Madras, and a philosopher-scholar who was the author of a book entitled *Cosmic Consciousness of the Vedantic Idea of Mukti,* published in 1909 and much appreciated throughout India. On him was laid the entire responsibility of

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[6] Blessed with Swamiji's inspiration Sister Nivedita took up this work and attained a great success in the task by writing a memorable volume known as *Cradle Tales of Hinduism.*

the journal, and for the successful accomplishment of this task Swamiji inspired this genuine soul through several letters replete with fiery language. Let this journal be your God, he said. In the same letter of 14 April 1896 occur some of the most inspiring lines Swamiji ever wrote to an Indian :

> 'Go on bravely. Do not expect success in a day or a year. Always hold on to the highest. Be steady. Avoid jealousy and selfishness. Be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity, and your country, and you will move the world. Remember it is the *person*, the life, which is the secret of power—nothing else. Keep this letter and read the last lines whenever you feel worried or jealous. Jealousy is the bane of all slaves. It is the bane of cur nation. Avoid that always. All blessings attend you and all success. (*C.W.* V, p. 107.)

The Manager of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, Singaravelu Mudaliar, Swamiji's dear 'Kidi', was an extraordinary character. With a brilliant academic career, he later became professor of physics in Madras Christian College. Swamiji's 'touch' had transformed his life. The householder Kidi became a renouncer. The only external activity he retained was the dedicated service to *Prabuddha Bharata*. When, in 1901, he died suddenly a premature death, the *Brahmavadin* commented that it was Swamiji's influence that was at the root of his deeply spiritual life. The *Brahmavadin* also wrote about his contribution to *Prabuddha Bharata* :

> 'Everyone who had the pleasure of his friendship knew the earnestness and sincerity of purpose that sang through his system—the main cause of the success of the *Awakened India*, whose manager he was from the outset—and was sanguine of his perseverance and ultimate success in the matter of spiritual realisation.'

The first editor of *Prabuddha Bharata* was B. R. Rajam Iyer, a young genius of twenty-four. He was a graduate. During his college days he would be absorbed in English novels and romantic poetry. Especially drawn to the poetry of Wordsworth and Shelley, he found in them profound yearnings for truth, power and beauty which instilled into his own mind a similar eagerness to be buried in the deep recesses of the soul. Probably that is why he plunged himself, afterwards, in the spiritual beauty of the poetry of the Tamil seer-poet Thayumanavar. Another celebrated Tamil poet, Kamban, had been, in his eyes, one of the greatest poetic geniuses of the world. Besides, he had already begun to write a novel known as *Kamalambal*, which was serially published in the journal *Vivek-Chintamani*. Naturally, such a young talent must have drawn the attention of many, not excluding the Vivekanandist group of Alasinga and his friends. It is said that Rajam Iyer had come into contact with Swamiji—although there is ample scope to doubt the fact—and had imbibed Vedantic ideas. In his book *Rambles in Vedanta*, Rajam Iyer has drawn some life-portraits in which Vedantic truths are exemplified. It was after the publication of an essay by Rajam Iyer in the *Brahmavadin* that Alasinga and others sought him out and selected him for the editorship of *Prabuddha Bharata*.[7]

Like that of *Brahmavadin* the prospectus of *Prabuddha Bharata* also was published in various papers and journals of India. Surprisingly enough, this prospectus did not carry name of Dr. Nanjunda Rao, the main organizer of the journal. The signatories in the prospectus of *Prabuddha Bharata* were : P. Aiyaswami, M.A., B.L. ; B. R. Rajam Iyer, B.A., G. G. Narasimha Charya,

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[7] 'On reading the article in the *Brahmavadin* in 1895 we felt the hand of a great man and longed to find him. And when we sought him out, we found him an unpolished diamond.' (Quoted from the article by G.S.K. published in *Prabuddha Bharata*, June 1898).

B.A., B. V. Kameswara, B.A. From this it would appear that the two papers used to be conducted in close collaboration.

The prospectus of *Prabuddha Bharata* was written under Swamiji's direction. At the beginning of it there was a statement regarding the world-wide expansion of Vedanta : 'The word Vedanta is nearly as familiar on the shores of Lake Michigan as on the banks of the Ganges.' In subsequent remarks the prospectus declared that despite such expansion of Vedantic ideas, materialism was spreading due to the influence of western education. As an attempt to fight this materialism, *Awakened India* was being published. What was the need for another journal, *Prabuddha Bharata*, when the same purpose was served by the *Brahmavadin*? The prospectus answers it thus :

> 'It will be a sort of supplement to the *Brahmavadin* and seek to do for students, young men and others, what that is already doing so successfully for the more advanced classes. It will, with that view, endeavour to present the sacred truths of Hindu Religion and the sublime and beautiful ideal of the Vedanta in as simple, homely and interesting a manner as possible and amongst others, will contain "Puranic" and "Classical Episodes" illustrative of those great truths and that high ideal, Philosophical Tales and Novels of the modern type, short articles on philosophical subjects written in a simple popular style free from technicalities, and the lives and teachings of great Sages and Bhaktas irrespective of caste, creed or nationality, who are and ever will be the beacon lights of humanity.'

It was declared that many eminent persons would write for the journal of whom 'Swami Vivekananda now in America' was one. Since the only aim of the journal was to popularize the highest truths of Hinduism, and not any kind of 'personal gain', the annual subscription was fixed at a very low rate—Re. 1/8 per annum, including postage.

The publication of the prospectus and then that of *Prabuddha Bharata* itself were welcomed heartily throughout India. This welcome was, more than simple applause at the birth of a new journal, in fact it was the recognition of the new movement ushered in by Vivekananda, a movement which, to many, was the Indian Renaissance movement itself.[8]

It was in an atmosphere of great expectation and promise that *Prabuddha Bharata* was born. In the editorial titled 'Ourselves', published in the first issue, the aim and future plan of action of the journal were discussed in more detail than in the previously published prospectus. The editorial quoted a considerable portion of the letter Swamiji had written to Dr. Nanjunda Rao. It also attempted to bring out the basic out-

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[8] Tilak's journal *'Marhatta'* (12 July 1896) and the Mahabodhi Society journal (October 1896) congratulated the nascent *Prabuddha Bharata.* After the completion of its first year, the *Brahmavadin* published, for quite obvious reasons, a collection of encomiums pronounced by various journals and many eminent persons upon *P. B.* After the publication of *Prabuddha Bharata*'s prospectus the *Indian Mirror* (14 June 1896) discussed, in a lengthy editorial, the nature and progress of the Vedanta movement in contemporary India and mentioned the vital role of Swami Vivekananda compared with that of others. In the same editorial the journal highly praised the *Brahmavadin,* the 'recognized organ of Swami Vivekananda', for it was not only preaching the message of Vedanta inside India, but was also spreading it abroad: 'The value of *Brahmavadin* is further increased by the fact of its attempt to diffuse the truths of Vedantism, which is another word for Adwaitism, far and wide, and, we think, it is rendering in this respect excellent service to the Hidu race.' 'Vedantism', according to the *Indian Mirror,* 'is destined in course of time, to spread throughout the world, and from the day of its revival in India is to be dated her renaissance.'

look of the Vedanta movement of Vivekananda. The first paragraph of this long editorial is worth quoting here with a view to defining precisely the contemporaneous Indian social and religious background in which the journal came into existence :

> 'The ready response with which our prospectus has been favoured on all sides, the eagerness with which our movement has been welcomed, and the support that has been generously promised to us in several quarters, all show that the time is ripe for similar undertakings, that there is a real demand in the country for spiritual nourishment—for the refreshment of the soul. But a few years ago, the *Prabuddha Bharata* or the *Brahmavadin* would have been utterly impossible. The promise of many a western 'ism' had to be tried, and the problem of life had itself been forgotten for a while in the noise and novelty of the steam-engine and the electric tram ; but unfortunately steam-engines and electric trams do not clear up the mystery ; they only thicken it. This was found out, and a cry, like that of the hungry lion, arose for religion and things of the soul. Science eagerly offered its latest discoveries, but all its evolution theories and heredity doctrines did not go deep enough. Agnosticism offered its philosophy of indifference, but no amount of that kind of opium-eating could cure the fever of the heart. The Christian Missionary offered his creed, but as a creed it would not suit ; India has grown too big for that coat'.

Swamiji, the founder of the journal, had sent from the West his blessings, and sent at the same time a criticism of its cover-design. Previously he had also criticized the cover of the *Brahmavadin,* but this time the criticism was more scathing and elaborate. In the very first issue of *Prabuddha Bharata* was printed a gaudy picture with a view to expressing a number of ideas. The organizers had high hopes centred on it and were naturally sensitive too ; but educated men who could praise such a gaudy picturesque cover for a Vedanta journal were not wanting.[9]

The success which *Prabuddha Bharata* achieved within a single year was literally beyond all expectations. In the 'Retrospect' published at the year-end the young editor wrote not a little exuberantly, which would seem quite excusable when it is remembered that the writer was only twenty-five. The editor admitted that it was Swamiji's blessing which was at the root of all the success. He also mentioned the 'sincerity of purpose and purity of heart' of his co-workers. The

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[9] *Marhatta,* a journal from Poona, wrote praising the cover-design : 'The front page is almost picturesque.' It may be assumed that such encomiums, both written and verbal, came from many persons. It all went to show, on the one hand, the poor standard of appreciation of art in contemporary India, and on the other, the elevated aesthetic outlook of Swamiji. He was much disappointed at the poor quality of the design and the high estimation which the organizers had about it. In his letter dated 14 July 1896 Swamiji wrote, 'One point I will remark however, the cover is simply barbarous. It is awful and hideous. If it is possible, change it. Make it symbolical and simple, without human figures at all. The banyan tree does not mean awakening, nor does the hill, nor the saint, nor the European couple. The lotus is a symbol of regeneration.

'We are awfully behind-hand in art, especially in that of painting. For instance, make a small scene of spring reawakening in a forest, showing how the leaves and buds are coming again. Slowly go on, there are hundreds of ideas to be put forward.' (*C.W.* V, p. 108.)

Not only in this one letter, but also in many more written afterwards Swamiji commented on the same topic. Presumably the enthusiasts, who held the 'cover' in high esteem, were hurt, and Swamiji, understanding the wound inflicted on their sentiment, became cautious lest the criticism of this minor aspect should discourage the organizers about the major—the journal itself. That is why he wrote, encouraging them once again, in the letter dated 26 August 1896 : 'Go on bravely—never mind about designs and other details at present—"with the horse will come the reins".' (*C.W.* V. p. 114.)

rest of the 'Retrospect' contained many more emotional effusions about the selfless enterprise of the organizers. Though they seem like over-statements, nevertheless it is such love for the ideal and self-confidence as was at the bottom of them, that always moves the world. A portion of the 'Retrospect' is as follows :

> 'The present number concludes the first volume of the *Prabuddha Bharata* and it is now time enough to ask what we have learnt from it. Thus questioning ourselves, we find we have learnt many things. Indeed, even its short history is remarkably full of lessons and one of the most important which we, i.e., those who are connected with it, have learnt and which we shall do well to carry with us to the very end of our lives is this—sincerity of purpose and purity of heart work wonders even in this "iron age". We had no grand ambitions when we started the journal such as bettering the world and so on. All that we wanted was to improve ourselves, and we had a conviction that what is good for us may at the same time be useful to some others. Nor had we any motives as fame, position, money etc. The idea of starting the journal struck us providentially, as it were, and whatever may be its fate in the future, we should be eternally grateful to God for having allowed us to enter into the work with singularly pure hearts. We were at this time perfectly free from both *rajasic* self-confidence and *tamasic* ambition. In such a happy state, which we shall ever remember with pleasure, we sought and obtained permission from where such permission should be obtained and "commenced operations". What success has attended us is due entirely to the blessings we received and the purity of our hearts. And that success has been of no small measure.'

Regarding the unexpected success of the journal the 'Retrospect' wrote :

> 'At the very starting we had 1,500 subscribers and every month the number has been steadily increasing and now it stands at about 4,500. *Our journal thus happens to be the most widely circulated monthly in all India.*' (Italics by the present author.)

Finally the 'Retrospect' attempts to show the future projects of the journal :

> 'No pain will be spared to make the journal more interesting, instructive and readable than even it is at present, and arrangements are being made to secure the assistance of well-known writers on the Vedanta and, God willing, the journal will be improved in every way. All that we can say is, that we shall work with zeal and sincerity, no matter what the result might be. "To work alone we have the right but not to the fruit thereof." '

Just two years after this splendid start, when the journal was at the zenith of its fame, there appeared in it, in June 1898, an editorial entitled 'Farewell' ! !—a most unexpected end of a journal of which much was expected, a 'darkness at noon'.

The journal closed publication. Why ? Was it because of financial difficulties ? No. It was clearly stated in the 'Farewell' editorial that 'the journal was a thorough success as a business concern', and along with that it was also announced that it was the most widely circulating monthly journal of India in those days. The sole reason for this abrupt closing down was nothing but the unexpected death of the young editor who was, in fact, its 'life and soul'.

The 'Farewell' began with the following lines :

> 'We regret very much to intimate to our subscribers that we are forced to stop the journal with this issue, as we find the loss sustained in the premature death of our Editor, Mr. B. R. Rajam Iyer, irreparable. Except the few "Contributions" and the "Extracts", all the articles were written by him, some under the following pseudonyms : T. C. Natarajan, M. Ranganatha Shastri, A Recluse, and Nobody-knows-who.'

Prabuddha Bharata, of course, did not disappear for good. Its resurrection was brought about after only two months when

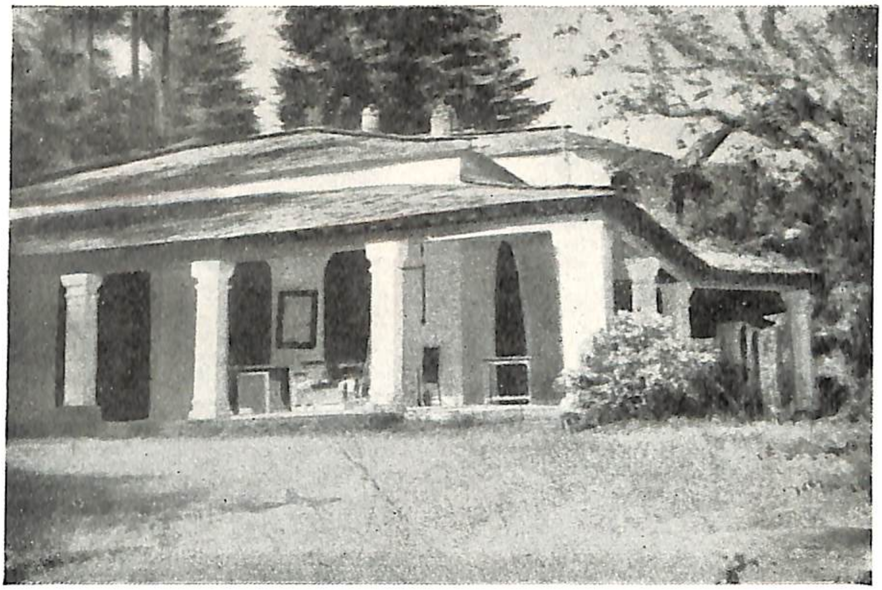
the Ramakrishna Mission, which had already been established as an organization, directly accepted the responsibility of the journal.

For more than one reason the Ramakrishna Mission felt it necessary to re-open the journal's publication. Firstly, the sudden closure of this very popular magazine was a matter of pain, and that personally for Swamiji, many of whose future plans were centred round this Vedanta journal. Secondly, the discontinuation of its publication seemed to indicate a defeat for the new Vedanta movement. The acceptance of a defeat like this in the very first phase of the movement would have been disastrous. Besides, the Ramakrishna Mission needed a mouth-piece of its own. Both the *Brahmavadin* and *Prabuddha Bharata* originated from the direct support and inspiration of Vivekananda and were his supporters, but they were not the journals of Vivekananda's organization, which was the Ramakrishna Mission. Their proprietorship belonged to others. (Swamiji refused to take over the ownership of them.) As regards policies both of them had been largely following Vivekananda's ideas, but there was no binding that they would continue along the same path up to the last. As long as Swamiji did not found any organization such journals, run by the devotees and admirers of Swamiji, could serve the purpose; but after the founding of the Ramakrishna Order it became an indispensable necessity to have a journal of its own. The sudden closure of *Prabuddha Bharata* offered an opportunity for the Mission to rejuvenate this well-known journal as its own organ. Personally, I believe that the Ramakrishna Mission would definitely have published another organ of its own, even if *Prabuddha Bharata* had not closed down.

In this connection we may add a significant piece of information. The editorials during the last phase of Rajam Iyer's editorship were not fully in keeping with the ideas of Swamiji. He came under new influences during these last days, and began to interpret Vedanta in a novel way; and that 'peculiar interpretation of Vedanta' completely fascinated the organizers of *Prabuddha Bharata*. It was stated as a reason for the journal's discontinuation that there was none else who had the gift to interpret Vedanta in that way. The essay on 'Our Late Editor' may throw some light on the matter :

> 'To those who could read between the lines, it must have been evident that the *Prabuddha Bharata* presented a peculiar interpretation of the Vedanta, and in this sense the journal had a marked individuality or personality, that of its editor. . . . It is our belief that the extraordinary popularity of the journal all over the length and breadth of India and even abroad was due not so much to the Vedanta merely as such promulgated by the journal as to the peculiarly beautiful and non-mystical interpretation which the journal presented. And as there is none to our knowledge who can rightly fill the place of the saint-editor whom we have lost, we are unable to continue the journal as other journals or magazines might under similar circumstances have been continued.'

In the next new phase, *Prabuddha Bharata* began publication in August 1898. In the same issue the editorial expressed in polite but firm language the difference between its earlier principles and the new ones it was going to follow thenceforward. There was in it also a criticism of the old cover-design. The editorial emphasized the fact that the days when the 'white man and his fair lady' wandering through Indian forests would sit at the feet of the Indian Yogī under the banyan tree and hear from his lips the message of Immortality, were gone. This was what the cover had attempted to depict beginning from the first issue of *Prabuddha Bharata* ; and there-



THOMSON HOUSE



Mayavati Advaita Ashrama where Swamiji stayed



Mrs. C. E. Sevier



Capt. J. H. Sevier



Sister Nivedita

fore its import was nothing but an 'anachronism'.

The first editorial of the new phase wrote :

> 'It would be an anachronism to continue to paint Western men and women straying to-day into Indian woods, and alighting as if by nearest chance, upon a Hindu Sage, and standing there, shy and uncertain, at a safe distance, ready to fly at a moment's notice, when as a matter of fact the Sannyasin's banner has been carried by the rising sun of the *Prabuddha Bharata* itself, to the very heart of the West, and that Noble Truth—the one thing that is the inheritance of India alone amongst the nations—the Truth that behind this manifold curtain of existence there is Unity, is winning its way daily and hourly deeper into the hearts of men and women in the West, illuminating their science and philosophy, and giving a colour all its own, to their profoundest utterances.'

From the same standpoint another significant change was introduced in the journal. The motto of the earlier phase 'He who knows the Supreme attains the Highest' (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*) was replaced by another Upaniṣadic dictum, 'Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*).

With this second phase of *Prabuddha Bharata* was inextricably connected another name—Advaita Ashrama—and it even now continues to be so. For a long time Swamiji had been thinking of an ashrama in the lap of the Himalayas, which would be consecrated to Advaita alone, where there would be no place for rituals or image-worship, and where lovers of Vedanta both from East and West would assemble and contemplate on Truth Indivisible with the glory of the sublime eternally snow-capped Himalayas in front of them. This idea of Swamiji* inspired the minds of two English souls—the middle-aged Captain Sevier and his wife. Ever since the young radiant monk of thirty-three years, Vivekananda, had, in his rich deep voice, first spoken to them in London the gospel of eternal life and Truth, they had realized at once that this was the man—the anointed one—and that this was the philosophy they had been seeking all through their life. The only vocation for them, they understood, would be to follow this Truth. Captain J. H. Sevier and Mrs. Charlotte Elizabeth Sevier 'followed' Vivekananda and finally came to India ; and then they began to search for a suitable place for the 'Advaita Ashrama' of Swamiji's dream. The proper site was not available at once ; but the Seviers were in a hurry to find a shelter from which *Prabuddha Bharata* could be started at the earliest opportunity.

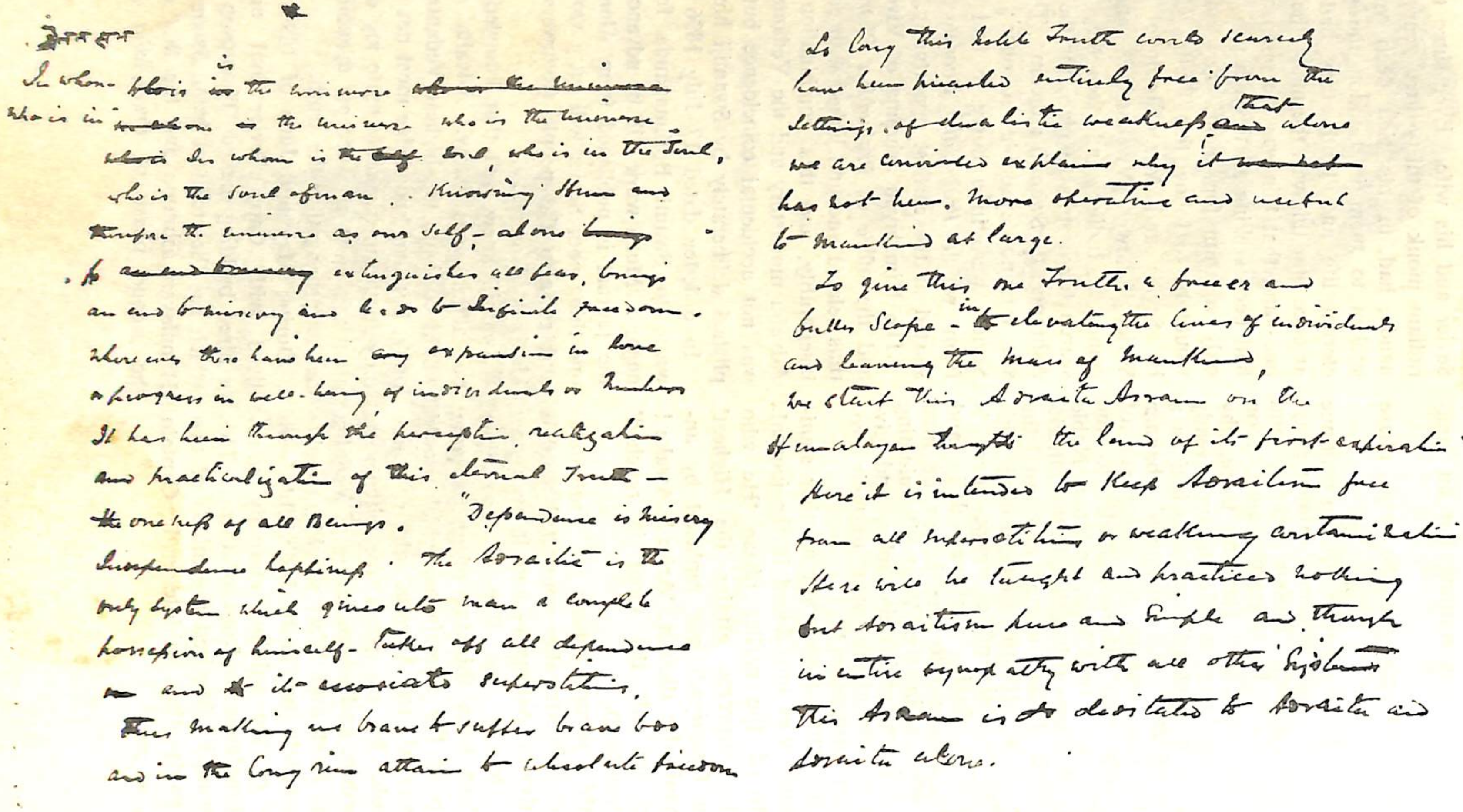
The Himalayan ashrama of Vivekananda and the office of *Prabuddha Bharata* were thus related and and linked with each other inseparably, and this combination of the Advaita monastery and the Vedanta journal was not accidental coincidence but accomplished deliberately by Swamiji himself.

In a letter dated 17 July 1896 Swamiji wrote to Swami Brahmananda from Srinagar : 'Much work will be advanced when the journal is published from Almora. For one thing poor Sevier will get a work to do and so also the people (followers of the ideal) of Almora. . . . '

Swamiji knew well that knowledge without action goes astray. Advaita Ashrama would cultivate the highest Vedanta philosophy, but that knowledge must not be spent only in the unspeakable mute joy of realization : it must also become dynamic in the act of propagating the truth.

During May and June of 1896 Swamiji lived with Capt. Sevier and others in a hired building named 'Thompson House', which has the credit of being Swamiji's first Himalayan ashrama and the first office of the second phase of *Prabuddha Bharata*.

* Vide page 280.



ॐ तत् सत्

In whom is the universe who is in the universe who is the universe, in whom is the Soul, who is in the Soul, who is the soul of man. Knowing Him and therefore the universe as our Self, alone extinguishes all fear, brings an end to misery and leads to Infinite freedom. Wherever there has been any expansion in love or progress in well-being of individuals or numbers It has been through the perception, realization and practicalization of this Eternal Truth — the oneness of all Beings. "Dependence is misery Independence happiness." The Advaita is the only system which gives unto man a complete possession of himself — takes off all dependence and its associate superstitions, thus making us brave to suffer brave to do and in the long run attain to Absolute freedom.

So long this Noble Truth could scarcely have been preached entirely free from the settings of dualistic weakness; that alone we are convinced explains why it has not been more operative and useful to mankind at large.

To give this one Truth a freer and fuller scope in elevating the lives of individuals and leavening the mass of mankind, we start this Advaita Asram on the Himalayan heights the land of its first expiration.

Here it is intended to keep Advaitism free from all superstitions or weakening contamination. Here will be taught and practised nothing but Advaitism pure and simple and though in entire sympathy with all other systems This Asram is dedicated to Advaita and Advaita alone.

Facsimile of Swamiji's writing on the ideals of the Advaita Ashrama.

REPRODUCTION OF THE FACSIMILE ON PAGE 280

In Whom is the Universe, Who is in the Universe, Who is the Universe; in Whom is the Soul, Who is in the Soul, Who is the Soul of man; knowing Him—and therefore the Universe—as our Self, alone extinguishes all fear, brings an end to misery and leads to Infinite Freedom. Wherever there have [has] been expansion in love or progress in well-being, of individuals or numbers, it has been through the perception, realization and the practicalization of this Eternal Truth—The Oneness of All Beings. "Dependence is misery. Independence is happiness." The Advaita is the only system which gives unto man complete possession of himself, takes off all dependence and its associated superstitions, thus making us brave to suffer, brave to do, and in the long run attain to Absolute Freedom.

So long this Whole Truth could scarcely have been preached entirely free from the settings of dualistic weakness; that alone, we are convinced, explains why it has not been more operative and useful to mankind at large.

To give this *One Truth* a freer and fuller scope in elevating the lives of individuals and leavening the mass of mankind, we start this Advaita Ashrama on the Himalayan heights, the land of its first expiration.

Here it is intended to keep Advaitism, pure and simple; and though in entire sympathy with all other systems, this Ashrama is dedicated to Advaita and Advaita alone.

Capt. Sevier arranged for a hand press, and with its help the first number of *Prabuddha Bharata* came out in August 1898. Swami Swarupananda became the editor, and Capt. Sevier the manager. In this number were published two poems by Swamiji, one 'To the Awakened India', the other 'Requiescat in Pace'. The first was a call to *Awakened India* by the awakener himself; and the second was a prayer for peace eternal on the departed J. J. Goodwin, the great English soul who sacrificed his life as a martyr for the sake of India. The new India must arise, but the resurgence needed the awakening of many a noble soul—this was, as it were, the theme the two poems sought to express.

Sister Nivedita describes in her notes how deeply absorbed Swamiji was during this period, in thoughts of *Prabuddha Bharata*:

> 'At this time, the transfer of the *Prabuddha Bharata,* from Madras to the newly established Ashrama at Mayavati was much in all our thoughts. The Swami had always had a special love for this paper, as the beautiful name he had given it indicated. He had always been eager, too, for the establishment of organs of his own. The value of the journal in the education of Modern India, was perfectly evident to him, and he felt that his Master's message and mode of thought required to be spread by this means, as well as by preaching and by work. Day after day, therefore, he would dream about the future of his papers, as about the work in its various centres. Day after day he would talk of the forthcoming first number, under the new editorship of Swami Swarupananda. And one afternoon he brought to us, as we sat together, a paper on which, he said, he had "tried to write a letter, but it *would* come this way!" —"To the Awakened India"'[10] (*Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda,* chap. vii).

We also come to know (from the Appendix to *Notes of Some Wanderings* given in Vol. I of *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*) that Swamiji had even envisaged Nivedita's joining *Prabuddha Bharata* as a worker. Nivedita writes: 'The *Prabuddha Bharata's* first number had just arrived, and there was some thought of despatching Nivedita to Almora to help the Editor.'

[10] The poem 'To the Awakened India' is printed elsewhere in this number.—*Ed.*

The cantonment town of Almora could not satisfy Capt. Sevier as the site for establishing Swamiji's Himalayan ashrama, and he was searching for a better place. Finally a suitable site was found. The 'shy captain and his imaginative wife' felt happy about it. Covering an entire hillock, it was absolutely solitary, at a distance of fifty miles from Almora town. The place, previously a section of a tea-estate, had belonged to a retired general of the Indian Army, Mr. McGregor.

At an altitude of seven thousand feet, and with a lovely little shallow lake situated several hundred feet above, the place provided a most sublime site from where one could view the vast expanse of the eternally snow-capped Himalayas, and feel profound solitude which was only intensified by the silent-breathing of tall sturdy Deodars looking skyward. (The nearest railway station was only 60 miles away.) In such a spot, on the auspicious day of Sri Ramakrishna's nativity, was founded the Advaita Ashrama—on 19 March 1899—and the place which had previously been known as 'Māyeepat' was given the new name—Mayavati.

Mayavati provided habitation for both Advaita Ashrama and *Prabuddha Bharata*. One small press was arranged there for the printing of the journal, and some workers were brought. The principal responsibility went to Swami Swarupananda, the first president of Advaita Ashrama, and of course the two founders, Capt, Sevier, the manager of *Prabuddha Bharata,* and Mrs. Sevier, his wife.

Needless to say that to run a paper in those solitary mountain surroundings far away from cities was in itself more of a spiritual practice than mere work. The whole activity of *Prabuddha Bharata* turned into an unbroken contemplation of the highest Vedantic truth of Oneness, and the dissemination of that spiritual realization. Swamiji felt extremely happy. From New York he wrote to a monk of the Advaita Ashrama in August 1900: 'Tell Swarup that I am very much pleased with his conducting of the paper. He is doing splendid work. (*C.W.* VIII, p. 530.)

Swamiji had profound love for Swarupananda and faith in him. The day Swarupananda had joined the Ramakrishna Order, Swamiji had said, 'We have made an acquisition today'—which bespoke Swamiji's intuition about the deep spirituality of Swarupananda. Swarupananda was given Sannyāsa on 29 March 1898. It was precisely at that period that Swamiji had started thinking about a journal for the Mission. No wonder that Swamiji thought of Swarupananda as one who could be of substantial help in this matter.

The pre-monastic name of Swarupananda was Ajoyhari Bandopadhyaya. In that name he was then editor of the journal *Dawn* along with Sri Satish Chandra Mukherjee. Moreover, Ajoyhari was a staunch Advaitist. Swamiji was seeking a sincere non-dualist who could look after Advaita Ashrama and conduct, in collaboration with the Advaitist Seviers, *Prabuddha Bharata,* in the true spirit of Advaita philosophy. Swarupananda could harmonize and fulfil both these needs.[11]

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[11] Swarupananda did not live long. He died only a few year after his master, Vivekananda. A portion of what the *Mysore Herald* published on this occasion, in the 28 August issue, is reproduced below:

'The Swami was 38 years of age when he died. He took Sannyasam 8 years ago and immediately became the editor of *Prabuddha Bharata.* He had also been the editor of *Dawn.* He was a devoted student of Sankaracharya and was very well-known for his Sanskrit and English scholarship.'

In the obituary published in *Prabuddha Bharata* (July 1906) the following lines occur:

'It was under his able editorship that the *Prabuddha Bharata* attained to its present wide circulation. What he sought were the attainments

The man who had dedicated his wealth and labour to build up Advaita Ashrama also sacrificed his own life for the cause. On 28 October 1900 Capt. Sevier died in his cherished ashrama at Mayavati. In fact, scarcely any proper treatment could be arranged, and Mr. Sevier died before the watching eyes of his helpless wife. According to his last wish his body was cremated in the traditional Hindu way on the bank of a streamlet flowing a little below the ashrama. There, where long ago the last flicker of the funeral fire was extinguished, one now feels only a beatitude and peace in trees and creepers, and a pervading silence in surrounding nature. Yet we know that the fire of the ideal he lived and died for like a martyr, as Swamiji said afterwards about his beloved Sevier, is still burning in the pages of *Prabuddha Bharata*. At the spot of his funeral, no memorial has been erected for the Advaitist Captain, but as we know well enough, both the Advaita Ashrama and the *Prabuddha Bharata* stand as the best memorial of this great life.

After the death of Mr. Sevier, Mrs. Sevier continued to stay at the Mayavati ashrama for seventeen more years, spending the holy days of widowhood in the midst of Himalayan sublimity. In the ashrama she became the 'mother' to everyone who called her 'Mataji'. To the villagers of the vicinity she was a '*Devi*', a goddess. When someone asked her, 'How do you spend the days in such solitude?' She replied, 'I think of Swamiji.'

And how much did Swamiji think of them? Swamiji was abroad when Capt. Sevier passed away; but who knows how Swamiji's heart suddenly grew anxious and drawn as if by an unknown attraction, he suddenly returned to India only to hear the sad news of the passing away of Captain Sevier. Despite ill-health he immediately rushed to Mayavati, ignoring all the difficulties and risks of travelling in the snowing winter days of January. This is the ever cherishable richest treasure of Advaita ashrama that it received the unbounded unreasoning love of Swamiji.

Advaita Ashrama and *Prabuddha Bharata* are two unforgettable chapters in Swamiji's life. It was at Mayavati that Swamiji did his last work of journalism. The last three articles Swamiji wrote were 'Aryans and Tamilians', 'The Social Conference Address'; 'Stray Thoughts on Theosophy'. All of them were not published in Swamiji's name. The articles, varied as they are in theme and style, can be considered choice specimens of journalistic writing even by the most modern standard. The articles are, firstly, topical; for example, 'The Social Conference Address' was in the context of a lecture that had been recently delivered by Ranade, and 'Stray Thoughts on Theosophy' was written by way of comments on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Theosophical Society. Secondly, they are replete with keen humour and with which instantly attract the readers' mind and smash the opponents. The style is pointed, forceful and withal passionate. In fine by being able to produce such writings even a first-rate journalist would be gratified. Yet this is not all there is about Vivekananda's writings. For, there is always, and will always be in those pages, the palpable presence of Vivekananda, the prophet, and there is the prophet's vision which alone can view the vast national life in its wholeness and given directives for its regeneration. One always sees, behind those words of Vivekananda, the selfless seer who uncompromisingly reveals the truth and at the same time radiates love towards all.

It was at Mayavati that the journalism of Vivekananda flashed forth for the last time.

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of high ideals, which could have emanated from nothing but the greatest and purest aspirations and an inextinguishable belief in the truth of Advaita.'

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SOCIALISM

SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

Socialism is the talk of the day. It has caught the imagination of the people, and an attempt is on foot to get as many great men of old affiliated to its cause as possible. Well-meaning interpreters discover a socialist in Mahatma Gandhi. Swami Vivekananda too was a socialist according to their way of understanding him. And the irony of it is that some religious followers of Swamiji feel elated when they hear him eulogized as the fore-runner of socialism in India. His socialistic bias was pointed out first by no less a person than Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta, his own youngest brother, who pinned his faith mainly on Swamiji's own utterance, 'I am a socialist.' According to Dr. Dutta, the religion or spirituality that Swamiji talked of was a sort of camouflage that Swamiji adopted for popularizing his socialistic thoughts among a people steeped in medieval religious ideologies. The socialists may talk in that strain either out of conviction or as a strategy for winning over the unwary; but when the religious followers of Swamiji fall into their trap or become complacent, one has to stop and think. This is utter confusion of thought and in the process one may lose sight of the real values that Swamiji stood for. He did talk of both religion and socialism; but what was the inner core of his message? Did he discover spirituality as the essence of humanity, or was it anything else? That is the question.

In this connection we are reminded of an incident related in the reminiscences of Mahapurusha Swami Shivanandaji. An old lady took initiation from him. But her brother too was a *guru* in his own way, giving initiation to many in the names of traditional deities. The brother would very often taunt his sister by saying that she had been misled and that her faked *mantra* had no value at all; she should rather give up that *mantra* and take initiation from him afresh if she was to be saved. This went on for a long time, till the lady's faith got a little shaken; and when one day her sister-in-law wanted to know what *mantra* she had got from her *guru*, the lady in her confusion wrote it down on a piece of paper and handed it over to the sister-in-law, though according to Hindu tradition, a *mantra* should never be divulged to others. The brother perhaps wanted to get hold of her secret through his wife for his own use; and he succeeded because the lady had lost grip on herself for the time being as a result of persistent deception. The incident has a lesson for us. When socialists interpret Swamiji in their own way and declare vehemently that they alone have the key to his whole philosophy while we have not, we may just lose our self-confidence and unwarily enter their camp giving up our own cherished *mantra,* as it were, in order to ingratiate ourselves with others by falling in line with the dominant movement. Let us then consider calmly and closely what Swamiji really meant when he said, 'I am a socialist,' what kind of socialism he talked of and how he wanted to usher in his socialistic society.

It is a matter of common sense that mere talk or praise or even intellectual predilection for a certain point of view does not prove one's identification with or involvement in it. This may just be a temporary outburst not really in favour of that particular view-point, but rather against some other idea or situation that distresses the speaker. That Swamiji was not satisfied with the prevailing social conditions is a well known fact, and to draw his country-

men's pointed attention to the intolerable situation which needed immediate overhauling, he might have cried out in despair, 'I am a socialist', without meaning that he was actually so. Torn out of context, and not read against the background of his philosophy of life and society, such a stray sentence should not be taken literally, as we should not take many of his other sentences like, 'I am not a saint', or 'I have helped you all I could, you must now help yourselves.'

Besides, even a religious leader has to speak not only in the language of the people concerned, he has also to take note of their tendencies and aspirations and the social tensions developing around them. To be effective amidst the prevailing conditions and to give his message a lasting and universal form, he has at times to be prophetic in his utterances, drawing attention to the consequences of a certain complex situation, thus having the way, perhaps indirectly, for a smoother working of the social machinery and bringing about an actively progressive and liberal outlook for a better social order. They talk religion and religion alone, but their talk, being expressed in such a milieu, gets partially mixed up with social movements. No honest thinker, nevertheless, can mistake their real intention or miss the inner core of their message. Sri Ramakrishna, for instance, very often touched upon social problems in the course of his talks with devotees. In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* we come across such expressions as: 'Empty stomach and religion go ill together', 'the devotees have no caste', 'a man is to be honoured if he keeps his mind fixed on God even though he may eat pork, while he is to be condemned whose mind remains engaged in lust and lucre even though living on the strictest vegetarian diet', 'one can accept food even from a pariah if the latter is a devotee of God.' Yet for all these utterances his worst critic will not say that Sri Ramakrishna was a social reformer. Similarly, we shall cease to think of Swamiji as a socialist in the ordinary sense if we study him properly.

Let us, for instance, look at the context of the sentence, 'I am a socialist', so confidently quoted by Dr. Bhupendra Dutta. The passage runs thus:

> 'I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread. The other systems have been tried and found wanting. Let this one be tried—if nothing else, for the novelty of the thing. A redistribution of pain and pleasure is better than always the same persons having pains and pleasures.... Let every dog have his day in this miserable world.'[1]

Does this conform to the sentiment or conviction of a confirmed socialist? Would a socialist talk so haltingly and apologetically? But let us go deeper.

Swami Vivekananda thought that socialism would be an inevitable outcome of the social conditions prevailing in his day, nay he even showed a predilection for it under the then existing circumstances. Analysing the social dynamism in India, he declared:

> 'Yet a time will come when there will be the rising of the Śūdra class, *with their Śūdrahood*; that is to say, not like that as at present, when the Śūdras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaiśya or Kṣatriya; but a time will come when the Śūdras of every country, with their inborn Śūdra nature and habits—not becoming in essence Vaiśya or Kṣatriya, but remaining as Śūdras—will gain absolute supremacy in every society.'[2]

And he foretold: 'Everything goes to show that Socialism or some form of rule by the people, call it what you will, is coming on the boards.'[3]

He wept for the poor. 'Sympathy for the

1 *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 1963 ed., Vol. VI, pp. 382-83.

2 Ibid. IV, p. 468.

3 Ibid. V, p. 202.

poor, the downtrodden even unto death—this is our motto', he declared, and he added: 'Feel for the miserable and look up for help—it shall come!' It has to come, for Swamiji believed that even God feels for the poor and incarnates off and on to give them a lift. God feels for them, he knew, and yet how neglected are they by society! 'How my heart ached', said he, 'to think of what we think of the poor, the low, in India.' 'Remember', he thundered, 'that the nation lives in the cottage.' The Śūdras are the real producers of wealth, and yet they have been neglected all along, and 'as the result of grinding pressure and tyranny, from time out of mind, the Śūdras' have become servile and have lost the urge for the betterment of their lot. There had been plenty of exploitation and misappropriation of the fruits of their labour: 'They have worked so long uniformly like machines guided by human intelligence and the clever educated section have taken the substantial part of the fruit of their labour.'[4] 'They have no chance, no escape, no way to climb up.... They sink lower and lower every day; they feel the blows showered upon them by a cruel society and they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men!'

The upper classes too have degraded themselves by keeping down the masses; for a brother cannot but degenerate morally and spiritually when he pulls down his own brother. India lost her liberty because at home she denied it to her own people.

Swamiji had acquaintance with all the other theories and sentiments of the socialists, and he voiced them unfalteringly and unequivocally: 'Whether the leadership of society be in the hands of those who monopolize learning or wield the power of riches or arms, the source of its power is always the subject masses.' 'The people will certainly want the satisfaction of their material needs, less work, no oppression, no war, more food.' 'Material civilization, nay even luxury is necessary to create work for the poor.' The present system of distribution of wealth makes the poor poorer and the rich richer. The lower classes of India 'have been silently working through long ages and producing the entire wealth of the land without a word of complaint'.[5] Presently they are disunited, and thus exposed to exploitation; but they are getting modern knowledge and soon they will understand their position. When awakened from their slumber, they will get all their wrongs redressed. That day is not far off!

Swamiji was not scared by this possibility, nay inevitability, of the rise of the Śūdras; on the contrary he would have welcomed it if no better way could be discovered for improving their lot. Disappointed with the upper classes of India at their neglect of the masses and shutting their eyes to the march of events, Swamiji thundered out:

> 'You, the upper classes of India, do you think you are alive? It is among those whom your ancestors despised as "walking carrion", that the little of vitality there is still in India, is to be found; and it is you who are the real "walking corpses".... You merge yourselves in the void and disappear, and let New India arise in your place. Let her arise—out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough, out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts and from markets. Let her emerge from groves and forests, from hills and mountains.... No sooner will you disappear than you will hear the inaugural shout of Renascent India, ringing with the voice of a million thunders and reverberating throughout

[4] Ibid. VII, pp. 148-49.

[5] Ibid. p. 148.

the universe, "*Wah guru ki fateh*"—"Victory to the *guru*!" '[6]

The masses had to be uplifted and emancipated at all costs. The upper classes had failed to fulfil their duty of raising them, and, if this failure continued, would it not be better to allow the masses to take care of themselves? That is how Swamiji seems to have thought.

So far we walk hand in hand with the socialists; but the parting of ways is just ahead!

We ask again: with what was Swamiji really concerned—was it spirituality or socialism? Let Swamiji speak for himself: 'My ideal indeed, can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every moment of life.'[7] And lest confusion about his inner feeling still linger in some minds, we quote another telling passage:

> 'Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas. The first work that demands our attention is that the most wonderful truths confined in our Upaniṣads, in our scriptures, in our Purāṇas must be brought out from the books, brought out from the monasteries ... and scattered broadcast all over the land.'[8]

But if that was his intent, why did he turn to socialism at all? For an answer we have already referred to his broad sympathy for the masses. His philosophy of worship of the poor Nārāyaṇas, which he inherited from Sri Ramakrishna, was equally responsibile for this, nay, we may argue that his sympathy was a natural corollary of this spiritual conviction. His rational approach to the problems of life also contributed not a little to this. He knew that people could not jump out of themselves all of a sudden; there are such things as individual capacity and gradual progress. All cannot tread the razor-like supreme spiritual path, which requires long preparation. Broadly speaking, one has to rise from indifference or lethargy to involvement and action, and from action to complete resignation to the will of God. The mistake of decadent Buddhism was that it unwittingly came to believe in the possibility of immediate and universal liberation through renunciation and thus opened the door of monasticism to all. But Swamiji's idea was different. He took stock of the situation and posed a very suggestive question: '... In all India, there are, say, a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now for the spiritualization of these, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation?'[9] Elsewhere he said that so long as the last dog in the country remained hungry, his first duty would be to feed it. In spite of all this, he differed fundamentally with many other socioligists. His stand was that though the people had to be fed and their standard of living had to be raised, this was not to be achieved at the cost of religion. Besides, he found no incompatibility between social progress and spiritual advancement. He wanted the masses to rise with their spiritual heritage intact: 'Can you give them [the masses] their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature?'[10] His motto was 'elevation of the masses without injuring their religion'.[11]

He also believed that religion can play an active role in uplifting the masses. His simple theory was that the Vedāntic knowledge which can ensure salvation can certainly give men enough strength for producing food and other necessities of life.

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6 Ibid. pp. 326-28.

7 Ibid. p. 498.

8 Ibid, III, p. 221.

9 Ibid. IV, p. 368.

10 Ibid. p. 29.

11 Ibid.

Swamiji did not accept either the materialistic interpretation of history of Marx or the idealistic interpretation of Hegel; his was what may be called the spiritualistic interpretation. Unlike Marx, he did not believe in the primacy of matter, nor did he agree with Hegel that the Absolute Idea went on evolving indefinitely. He had his own theory of social changes. He believed that although social evolution aims at progress, this does not proceed in a straight line, it has rather a wavelike movement: 'No progress is in a straight line'; 'all progress is in successive rise and falls.' Again, 'civilization is the manifestation of the Divinity in man'; 'civilization is the manifestation of spirituality.' And yet it is not a fact that either spirituality or materialism rules the earth for ever: 'Materialism and spirituality in turn prevail in society.' Evolution and involution similarly take turns in bringing about social changes. In the face of facts proving the opposite point of view, it is illogical to assume that human society depends for its evolution on the biological processes supposed to be prevalent on the lower levels of creation in the form of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest; rather in human society progress is brought about through love, sympathy and cooperation.

Even though adhering to the primacy of spirituality, Swamiji would not rule out mundane considerations. Two tendencies are ever at work—spirituality and materialism. Human nature being what it is, it will be irrational in the present state of social development to root out either of the two by force. Unfortunately, however, 'the present Hindu society is organized only for spiritual men and hopelessly crushes out everything else. Why? Where shall they go who want to enjoy the world a little with its frivolities?'

Lastly, equality of all is a far cry; rather we should accept unity in diversity as the law of nature: 'That all men should be the same could never be, however we might try. Men will be born differentiated—some will have more powers than others; some will have natural capacities, others not; some will have perfect bodies, others not.' So what is the way out of this tangle? Man cannot submit to this irrational natural set-up without a struggle, for the distinguishing feature of man lies in the possibility of his transcending nature in order to manifest the perfection that is already in him. Being a religious man Swamiji could not advocate the way of class struggle, though that seemed to be inevitable to him if the apathy of the upper classes continued. So he advised the upper classes to be more actively mindful of the needs of the masses. To avoid strife, they should strive for the intellectual and cultural uplift of the masses. He was not a revolutionary in the sense in which that word is generally understood. Of course he declared himself a root-and-branch reformer, but this reform had to be based on spiritual values and had to follow an evolutionary process. 'What I believe in', said he, 'is evolution'. Besides, it had to be carried out by the people themselves, and not be thrust on them from outside: 'They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation.... Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature. Our duty is to put ideas into their heads, they will do the rest.'[12]

The world was to be transformed; but how? Let us hear his own words: 'I am born to organize these young men... and I want to send them rolling like irresistible waves over India, bringing comfort, morality, religion, education to the

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[12] Ibid. p. 362.

doors of the meanest and most down-trodden. And this I shall do or die.' Everyone must get an equal opportunity for improving his lot : 'All the members of a society ought to have the same opportunity for obtaining wealth, education and knowledge.' Not that every society provides for such equality of opportunity. At least the Indian society of Swamiji's day did not, and hence he was convinced that 'those social rules which stand in the way of the unfoldment of this freedom are injurious and steps should be taken to destroy them speedily', for, 'freedom is the first condition of growth'.

Was Swamiji satisfied that socialism would ensure this precondition of growth ? Most probably not, as is evident from his definition of socialism : 'The doctrine which demands the sacrifice of individual freedom to social supremacy is called socialism, while that which advocates the cause of the individual is called individualism.'[13] According to his estimation, Hindu society is socialistic in so far as it regulates the individual's life at every turn by determining his position in society, his means of livelihood, his choice of a wife and many such things. It was obvious to him that this loss of individual freedom had produced stagnation all round. Social equality that in practice merely means ideological regimentation also did not appeal to him. His predilection was for a future society in which there would be a combination of Islamic body and Vedantic brain—social equality and intellectual and spiritual freedom. After analysing the trends in the East and West he declared :

> 'In India we have social communism, with the light of Advaita (non-dualism) —that is spiritual individualism—playing on and around it ; in Europe you are socially individualists, but your thought is dualistic, which is spiritual communism. Thus the one consists of socialist institutions hedged in by individualist thought, while the other is made up of individualist institutions within the hedge of communistic thought.'[14]

He was conscious of the attempt to build India after the pattern obtaining elsewhere. He naturally recoiled from such a transformation, though he often enough advocated a combination of all that is best in the Indian and European ideals. 'Can you make a European society with India's religion ?' he asked, and his answer was, 'I believe it is possible, and must be.'[15] But he left it at that. He also thought of the combination of Buddha's heart with Śaṅkara's intellect in the ideal man of the future. But as yet he had not clearly formulated the goal he aimed at, of which these were only partial expressions. A fresh scheme came to his mind when dealing with the caste question : 'If it is possible to form a state in which the knowledge of the priest, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial, and the ideal of equality of the last (the labourers) can all be kept intact, minus their evils, it will be an ideal state. But is that possible ?' The question itself indicated his own doubt. In this context again socialism flashed in his mind as a possible alternative, and as we have seen, he was inclined to accept this on the principle of half a loaf's being better than no bread. If nothing better was available for uplifting the masses both materially and spiritually, socialism would not be an unwelcome experiment if it could be reinforced by spirituality.

Thus he cogitated the improvement of human society with the help of various possible social institutions and adjustments. But he was fully convinced that parliament cannot make man ; rather man makes parlia-

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13 Ibid. p. 488.

14 Ibid. VIII, p. 269.

15 Ibid, IV, p. 368.

ment.[16] So although he thought in terms of organized activity for ensuring the common welfare, yet as a man of religion, he was ultimately drawn to the task of the spiritual betterment of every individual forming society. From this point of view he formulated his ultimate goal of social advance thus: 'We read that in the *satya-yuga* there was only one caste and that was the Brāhmaṇa. We read in the *Mahābhārata* that the whole world was in the beginning peopled with Brāhmaṇas,... and that when the cycle turns, they will go back to that Brāhmaṇical origin. This cycle is turning round now.'[17] 'This idea of *satya-yuga* is what would revivify India. Believe it.... Up boys, and put yourselves to the task!... Old Hinduism for ever!... Up, up, my boys, we are sure to win!'[18] By the term Brāhmaṇa he meant humanity at its best—spiritual, peaceful, loving and benign to all, having no selfish consideration, and at the same time possessing the highest wisdom. In that sense he declared, 'My disciples are all Brāhmaṇas.'

This Brāhmaṇahood he contrasted with priestcraft for which he had the utmost abhorrence. 'Priestcraft is the bane of India';[19] it is crystallized tyranny! Some western sociologists had blamed religion for the backwardness of the proletariat; but Swamiji was convinced that the real culprit was not religion but priestcraft, which had invented all the machinery of oppression. So priestcraft had to be rooted out to ensure the growth of the masses. Again, though he admitted that till the *satya-yuga* came, inequality would persist, yet he could not admit any claim to privilege on account of some superiority in physical traits or intellectual acumen: 'We must give up the idea of privilege, then will religion come. Before that there is no religion.'[20] 'The enjoyment of advantage over another is privilege.'[21] Socialists and communists are determined to abolish this privilege in the spheres of acquisition and distribution of wealth, where they have succeeded only partially. But in other more subtle forms of privilege they have not scored any victory at all. Swamiji's approach was more fundamental inasmuch as he wanted a change in man's moral outlook through a greater consciousness of his true spiritual nature. He found the panacea of all social evils in non-dualistic Vedanta, which declares the essential divinity of all.

In addition to the abolition of priestcraft and privilege and the more positive means of preaching broadcast the message of non-dualistic Vedanta for the inauguration of the *satya-yuga*—or rather for its consolidation, for he believed that the *satya-yuga* had already started with the advent of Sri Ramakrishna—Swamiji laid stress on the change of attitudes of the masses and upper classes. Strife will not help either; it will degrade both. The lower classes will not rise by levelling down the upper classes; their real destiny lies in raising themselves up spiritually and culturally. It is no use simply blaming others; they have to exert themselves and imbibe the qualities that make others great:

> 'Therefore our solution of the caste question is not degrading those who are already high up, is not running amuck through food and drink, is not jumping out of our own limits in order to have more enjoyment, but it comes by every one of us fulfilling the dictates of our

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[16] Cf. ibid. p. 192: 'No nation is great or good because parliament enacts this or that, but because its men are great and good.' And p. 200: 'You have the saying that men cannot be made virtuous by an Act of Parliament; ... And that is why religion is of deeper importance than politics, since it goes to the root, and deals with the essential of conduct.'

[17] Ibid. III, pp. 197-98.

[18] Ibid. V, pp. 31-32.

[19] Ibid. IV, pp. 327.

[20] Ibid. I, p. 428.

[21] Ibid. p. 435.

Vedantic religion, by our attaining spirituality, and by our becoming the ideal Brāhmaṇa.'[22]

According to Swamiji, socialism, even if brought about, without this spiritual uplift will not last. 'What guarantee have we that this or any civilization will last unless it is based on religion, on the goodness of man?' 'It is culture that withstands a shock, not a simple mass of knowledge.... Unless you give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses.'

And his exhortation to the upper classes was: 'The poor, the downtrodden, the ignorant, let these be your God.' The upper classes should give just because they have; they have to impart knowledge and culture as a matter of religious duty. And he warned that unless they did so their days would be numbered; the Śūdras would rise with their Śūdrahood, and not as Brāhmaṇas, and would wrest everything from them. There would be levelling down and not levelling up. So beware!

[22] Ibid. III, p. 198.

Hence our conclusion is that Swamiji was never an active protagonist of socialism as it is understood today. Yet his love for the masses and solicitude for their uplift were so great that he would have accepted socialism according to his own meaning of the term, if no better method could be found for achieving his goal, and if a spiritual basis could be evolved for this socialism. Thus it is quite clear that socialism as a political creed was not the panacea prescribed by Swamiji for all the ills of society. His message was spirituality, and socialism was just a compromise, if nothing better could be found.

But after considering all possible avenues of approach he affirmed his faith in his idea of *satya-yuga* for the revivification of India as a whole. For this he counted on the cooperation of the higher classes; but if that were not forthcoming, the elevating ideas that he had discovered would serve his purpose equally, for they, or rather the single concept of non-dualism which comprises them all, had in it the strength to bring about the regeneration of India and the world.

It is true that the social enthusiasm is an unsettling force which may unbalance for a time, break old religious habits and connections, and establish new contacts that are a permanent danger to personal religion. But the way to meet this danger is not to fence out the new social spirit, but to let it fuse with the old religious faith and create a new total that will be completer.... There is so much religion even in non-religious social work that some who had lost their conscious religion irretrievably have found it again by this new avenue. God has met them while they were at work with him in social redemption and they have a religion again, and a call to a divine ministry.

— WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH
(Social Christianity And Personal Religion).

From

Prabuddha Bharata

75 Years Ago

THE FIRST EDITORIAL

(Vol. I. No. 1, July 1896)

OURSELVES

The ready response with which our prospectus has been favoured on all sides, the eagerness with which our movement has been welcomed, and the support that has been generously promised to us in several quarters, all show that the time is ripe for similar undertakings, that there is a real demand in the country for spiritual nourishment — for the refreshment of the soul. But a few years ago, the *Prabuddha Bharata* or the *Brahmavadin* would have been utterly impossible. The promise of many a western 'ism' had to be tried, and the problem of life had itself been forgotten for a while in the noise and novelty of the steam-engine and the electric tram; but unfortunately steam-engines and electric trams do not clear up the mystery; they only thicken it. This was found out, and a cry, like that of the hungry lion, arose for religion and things of the soul. Science eagerly offered its latest discoveries, but all its evolution theories and heredity doctrines did not go deep enough. Agnosticism offered its philosophy of indifference, but no amount of that kind of opium-eating could cure the fever of the heart. The Christian Missionary offered his creed, but as a creed it would not suit; India had grown too big for that coat.

Just then it was found, and here is the wonder of Providential disposition, that the eyes of the western world were themselves turned towards India, turned, not as of old for the gold and silver she could give, but for the more lasting treasures contained in her ancient sacred literature. Christian Missionaries in their eagerness to vilify the Hindu, had opened an ancient magic chest, the very smell of whose contents caused them to faint. Oriental scholars, the Livingstones of eastern literature, had unwittingly invoked a deity, which it was not in their power to appease. As philologists are succeeded by philosophers, Colebrookes and Caldwells give birth to Schopenhauers and Deussens. The white man and his fair lady stray into the Indian woods and there, come across the Hindu sage under the banyan tree. The hoary tree, the cool shade, the refreshing stream, and above all the hoarier, cooler and the more refreshing philosophy that falls from his lips enchant them. The discovery is published; pilgrims multiply. A Sanyasin from our midst carries the altar fire across the seas. The spirit of the Upanishads makes a progress in distant lands. The procession develops into a festival. Its noise reaches Indian shores and behold! our motherland is awakening....

The awakening we speak of, of which there is an abundance of symptoms on every side will however not be like that of an eagle, which rises from sleep with renewed vigour and strength to roam and to fight, but that of a nightingale melting the hearers' hearts with its soft sweet melodies. Already the message of our motherland has gone to nations burning with social and political fever, and soothed them. To serve in the spreading of that message, and help in clearing away the haze that naturally prevails in our newly awakened country, after so long a sleep, will be the ambition of the Journal we have been enabled to bring into life today. The task we have set to ourselves is lighter than it would otherwise be, as there are journals like the *Brahmavadin* already

working in the field with wonderful results. Ours is only a humble attempt in the direction of these Journals and simplicity and fervour will be our chief aim. We have a great faith in the system of teaching principles by means of stories and indeed, as Swami Vivekananda wrote in his letter to us 'There is a great great chance, much more than you dream of, for those wonderful stories scattered all over the Sanskrit literature to be re-written and made popluar.' For these stories are not like the unhealthy, sensational, fifth-rate French novels of the day, the cobwebs spun by idle brains, but the natural flowers of great minds that could, from a Himalayas-like philosophic altitude, take a sweeping and sympathetic survey of the human race. That is why they bear the stamp of immortality on them. Centuries rolled away before the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata appeared, and centuries have yet to roll on before another of their kind can be made. They are not older than the mountains, but they will live longer than the mountains, and have more influence. One special feature of these stories is that they have a different meaning for every stage of human growth, and the ordinary man as well as the philosopher enjoys them, though each understands them in his own way. The reason for that is, that these stories were composed by men, far advanced in the ladder of human progress, some of whom, indeed, were on the top-most rung. Extracts and adaptations from these great books will be a chief feature of our Journal.

It is not however, intended to fill the whole Journal with stories only. Every issue will contain a number of articles on serious subjects ; but care will be taken to make them simple and interesting, and the technicalities of metaphysics will be scrupulously avoided. We shall endeavour to act up, as far as we can, to the advice which Swami Vivekananda had kindly given us with regard to the conduct of the Journal—'Avoid all attempts to make the Journal scholarly: it will slowly make its way all over the world, I am sure. Use the simplest language possible and you will succeed. The main feature should be the teaching of *principles* through stories. Do not make it metaphysical at all.... Go on bravely. Do not expect success in a day or a year. Always hold on to the highest. Be steady.... Be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity and your country and you will move the world. Remember it is the person—the life which is the secret of power, nothing else....'—and he has generously undertaken to contribute to the Journal as often as he can.

Though an organ of Hindu religion, the *Prabuddha Bharata* will have no quarrel with any other religion: for, really speaking, all religions are simply different phases of the same Truth, different methods of approaching God. 'I am in all religions as the string in a pearl garland' says the Lord. What humanity is to man, what existence is to living beings, that, Vedantism is to religions: it is their common essence, their inner unity, and as such, it can possibly have no quarrel with any of them—the whole has no quarrel with the part. On the other hand, it approves of the existing differences, and even welcomes their multiplication, so that no man might be left godless for want of a religion suited to his nature.

This Vedantic ideal of religious unity, or rather, of religious variety implies, not merely the spiritual growth of the individual from stage to stage, but also the growth of society by the due co-ordination of creeds. *Prabuddha Bharata* will deal with both the aspects of the ideal. The individuals make up the society, and the advancement of the former necessarily results in that of the latter. At the same time, society acts upon the individual and conditions him. As the

two are thus found to act and re-act on each other, it is necessary, that, side by side with the ideal of individual perfection, that of social perfection should also be presented. The ideal society, according to the Vedanta, is not a millennium on earth, nor a reign of angels, where there will be nothing but thorough equality of men, and peace, and joy—the Vedanta indulges in no such chimeras—but one, where religious toleration, neighbourly charity, and kindness even to animals form the leading features, where the fleeting concerns of life are subordinated to the eternal, where man strives not to externalise, but to internalise himself more and more, and the whole social organism moves, as it were, with a sure instinct towards God. This ideal will be steadily presented in these pages, but no attempt will be made to restore old institutions which have had their day, any more than to restore to life a dead tree. Our object will be to present the ideal, which, fortunately, never gets too old, leaving everyone to seek his own path of realization. The policy of breaking away from society and that of allowing it to grow of itself have, both of them their uses, and are equally welcome. But it is our firm conviction, that any real social advancement towards the ideal can only be effected by the example and teachings of men, who are intimately acquainted with the foundations of our society, or for that matter, any society whatsoever, who, by means of their own perfection, can understand the successive stages of human evolution as fully and as naturally, as the old man understands the child, the boy, and the adult, who know that, whether we will or no, the progress of the society as well as of the individual is always Godward, and know also that the means has always to be consistently subordinated to the end. Society is no toy and its architects *cannot* be ordinary men. The truest social reform has, at all times, come only from men, who strove to *be* good, rather than to *do* good, men from whose personal goodness sprang social advancement as naturally, as noiselessly and as beautifully as the smell from the full blown rose.

Having thus far stated, at some length, the objects and methods of the present Journal, we leave it to our readers to judge for themselves how far they are right and deserve encouragement. The movement would not have sprung into existence but for the active support of some really great men. 'To work we have the right' and the fruits are cheerfully resigned to Him who guides all and Himself wants no guide.

Move on, O Lord, in thy resistless path!
Till thy high noon o'erspreads the world,
Till every land reflects thy light,
Till men and women, with uplifted head,
Behold their shackles broken, and
Know, in springing joy, their life renewed!

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

MY MEMORIES OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

Swami Prabhavananda

One day after I had received my vow of Brahmaćarya from my master, Swami Brahmananda, he said to me, 'I would like you to stay for a while at the Allahabad Ashrama with Swami Vijnanananda (a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna). It is good to be under the shade of a big tree for some time.' Then he told me that Swami Vijnanananda was a *gupta Brahmajñānī* (a hidden knower of Brahman). He added, 'Vijnan, next to Ramakrishnananda, is the greatest devotee of Sri Ramakrishna.' To illustrate this, Maharaj mentioned an incident that had occurred while he was visiting the Allahabad Ashrama:

'One day a young college student came to me and asked for spiritual instructions. I told him, "I am a guest here. Go to Swami Vijnanananda, the abbot of this monastery." But Vijnan sent the boy back to me. I asked him again to go to Vijnan who alone could give spiritual advice in this monastery. And the poor boy was sent back to me once more. When I made him go to Vijnan for a third time, the latter said, "All right, Maharaj wants me to teach you, so I will. Wait a minute!" He opened a trunk, took out a photograph of me, gave it to the boy, and said, "Pray every day before this picture and ask for guidance. If you do, you will attain your goal. I know of no higher instructions than this."'

After relating this incident Maharaj remarked, 'Do you see what a great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Vijnan is?' Maharaj had no sense of ego or existence separate from Sri Ramakrishna. In his own eyes as well as his brother-disciples' he was completely identified with his master, and therefore any love for him was the same as love for Sri Ramakrishna.

Maharaj changed his mind and sent me to the Advaita Ashrama in the Himalayas instead of to Allahabad. Before going any further, let me state that Maharajji's words or wishes were always fulfilled. Years later I had the blessed privilege of closely associating with Swami Vijnanananda, though only for a short time. And this blessing I received during a visit in India after a stay in the United States of thirteen years. Mrs. Wyckoff, one of the three Mead sisters in whose house in South Pasadena Swamiji had stayed for six weeks, accompanied me to India. This house now belongs to the Vedanta Society of Southern California. (We called Mrs. Wyckoff 'Sister' or 'Sister Lalita'.)

Swami Vijnanananda, then Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Order, was staying at Belur Math. I wanted to see my mother, who was still living, and at the same time visit the holy places of Jayrambati and Kamarpukur, the birth-places of Holy Mother and Sri Ramakrishna, both of which were near Vishnupur, my mother's home town.

I went to Swami Vijnanananda to receive his permission to make the trip. When I entered his presence, he said: 'From where does this image appear?' (At the time I was wearing *gerua* cloth, but my hair was somewhat long and parted. Normally monks in India do not part their hair.) Omkarananda was present, and he introduced me as a disciple of Maharaj who had recently returned from America where I was doing the Lord's work. I prostrated before Swami Vijnanananda and asked his permission to visit my mother, as well as Jayrambati and Kamarpukur. 'I have never been to either of these places,' he said. 'Will you take me with you?'

'Of course, Maharaj,' I said. 'It will be a blessing to me.'

But after about an hour, he called me to him and said, very disappointed, 'Abani, I am sorry, but I cannot go with you. Bharat (Swami Abhayananda) tells me that on these dates a number of devotees from distant parts are coming to receive initiation.'

At my request it was decided to set new dates for the initiations and to inform the devotees by telegram.

Swami Vijnanananda was very pleased and made the remark: 'How clever! Solved so easily.'

So Swami Vijnanananda went with sister Lalita and me, accompanied by his attendant, Apurvananda.

Before we left for Vishnupur, I sent a telegram to my younger brother asking him to make arrangements to welcome Swami Vijnanananda in a befitting manner. My brother was then headmaster of the local high school. Three hundred students with their teachers were present to receive us at the railway station. Girls were standing on either side of our way as we passed the platform, and they were throwing flower petals. Vishnupur streets are dusty. The municipality ordered the streets watered through which we were to travel. There were two horse carriages. In one carriage sat Vijnan Maharaj, and I sat at his feet. The young schoolboys relieved the horses and themselves drew the carriage, in spite of our protests. Blessed indeed they were, drawing the carriage of Vijnan Maharaj.

We were guests of my mother in a separate house, where my sister used to cook for us.

I will not go into much detail regarding his visit there, except to say that in the little shrine in my mother's home he initiated several devotees from Vishnupur.

All arrangements were made for our visit to Jayrambati and Kamarpukur. Vijnan Maharaj was having his dinner and my mother was standing near him. In the course of conversation, my mother said, 'I like to accompany you to Jayrambati.' Vijnan Maharaj replied, 'There is no room in the car.' Mother insisted, 'Oh, you have to take me with you.' Vijnan Maharaj said, 'All right, then you sit on my head and go with us.' At this reply, my mother humbly prostrated at his feet and said, 'Oh no, I shall sit at your blessed feet and go.' Then Vijnan Maharaj smiled and said, 'You win.'

We hired a motor-car and a bus. In the car Vijnan Maharaj and Sister were seated in the back, and a devotee and I sat with the driver. In the bus the Swamis and Brahmacaris who came from the Bankura Ashrama went with my mother and my brothers and their family.

It was a most happy occasion to be at Jayrambati and Kamarpukur with Swami Vijnanananda, an associate of Sri Ramakrishna. I remember very vividly what a thrill passed through me as I saw Vijnan Maharaj seated on the porch of the house where Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother had lived. Their living Presence was felt.

There was no accommodation at that time for so many of us to stay at Jayrambati or Kamarpukur. We had to return the same day.

As we came back to Vishnupur, Vijnan Maharaj remarked to me, 'Isn't Sister (referring to Mrs. Wyckoff) wonderful? We sat together in the car for so many hours coming and going, and never a word from her. She is so silent.'

The American women that Vijnan Maharaj had met were all talkative. It was their training to carry on conversation. But Sister was different. She had met Swamiji and Swami Turiyananda, and her role was to offer service to them silently. Swami Vivekananda had remarked to her one day: 'You will do silent work for the Lord.'

And that's what she did. The Vedanta Society of Southern California owes its very existence to her silent devotion to the cause of Swamiji.

One day in the course of conversation I told Swami Vijnanananda what Maharaj had said to me about his greatness. To that he replied, 'Oh, Abani, don't believe all that. Maharaj saw an ocean of goodness in a drop.'

The senior Swami at the Bankura Ashrama urgently requested Swami Vijnanananda to come to Bankura, as there were many devotees there who were waiting to receive his grace. In answer to this request, Swami Vijnanananda said an amazing thing, 'Unless Abani asks me to go, I will not go.' Therefore the abbot of the ashrama came to me and reported what the Swami had told him. I said to him: 'But how can I ask him to go? We are having a wonderful spiritual feast in his presence. Furthermore, how is it possible for me to ask him to leave?' But this brother of mine would not let me alone and persistently urged me to do something. So I said to him, 'All right, let me see what I can do.' I went to Swami Vijnanananda, and stood before him with folded palms. He looked at me and said, 'So you want me to go?'

'No, Maharaj, but I beg you *to give liberation* to those devotees waiting at Bankura.' At once he left in a car with the abbot. And I felt at the time that thus he revealed to me his power as a knower of Brahman to liberate others.

Only on rare occasions did Swami Vijnanananda talk about his many spiritual visions. Once he told me the following experience:

'I went to visit Sarnath. Suddenly I lost all physical consciousness; my mind seemed almost to have vanished. I was enveloped in an ocean of light, the light that is vibrant with peace, joy, and knowledge. I felt as if I were living in Buddha. I do not remember how long I remained in that state. The guide thought that I had fallen asleep, and as it was getting late, he tried to awaken me and so brought me back to normal consciousness. Later, when I went to visit the temple of Viśvanātha in Banaras, I thought to myself, "Why have I come here? To look at a stone?" Then the same vision opened up. It was as if Viśvanātha were telling me: "The light is the same here as there—Truth is one."'

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One reason for the decadance of our country is that, in the name of religion, people put forward harmful theories, as a result of which, people lose their faith in religion itself. Simplicity, faithfulness, and purity of heart are called for. Jesus Christ had no weapons to fight with and suffered crucifixion for the sake of truth. We also have to do likewise, and then only will rise again the sun of India's glory.

—SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

KINDLE THE FIRE WITHIN

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

'Those who really want to live spiritual lives must give up, once and for all, this nibbling at things. Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life—think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success, and this is the way great spiritual giants are produced. Others are mere talking machines. If we really want to be blessed, and make others blessed, we must go deeper.... But those who take up just a bit of it and a little of everything else make no progress. It is of no use simply to take a course of lessons. To those who are full of *tamas*, ignorant and dull—those whose minds never get fixed on any idea, who only crave for something to amuse them—religion and philosophy are simply objects of entertainment. These are the unpersevering. They hear a talk, think it very nice, and then go home and forget all about it. To succeed, you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. "I will drink the ocean," says the persevering soul, "at my will mountains will crumble up." Have that sort of energy, that sort of will, work hard, and you will reach the goal.'[1]

—Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda, during his wandering days, once became the guest of a person who was not particularly religious-minded. Seeing the brilliance and scholarship and personality of Swami Vivekananda, he invited him to be his guest. While the Swami was staying there, many persons came to see him and talk with him. One elderly man was asking many questions. Suddenly Swami Vivekananda got excited and said, 'Can you do some horrible action, something tremendously wrong ? ' All were astounded. Afterwards, the host asked Swami Vivekananda, 'Why did you say those things to that man ? ' He answered, 'Whatever I tell him, he says he cannot do that. He finds some excuse for not doing anything I say. What can you do with such a man ? How can he develop his spiritual life if he hasn't even the energy to do evil ? He is full of *tamas*, full of inertia. He is not in a mood to do anything. What I said to him is just what he needs.'

You know how strong Swami Vivekananda was. He said, 'Do even evil like a man ! Be wicked, if you must, on a great scale.'[2] Let there be fire within you. Let there be great will to do certain things, In his Indian lectures he said, especially to young men, 'You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gītā. You will understand the Gītā better with your biceps, your muscles a little stronger.'[3] He said : You must have courage, you must have fire within, you must have the earnestness to put ideas into practice. Simply reading will not do.

Everywhere he wanted to bring out the potentialities in human beings. To Indians he said : The whole of India is a sleeping leviathan. All are sleeping, the vast country is sleeping. He said : Is there any religion left in India ? For the last two thousand years you have been discussing the momentous question, whether to eat with the right hand or the left hand. All your religion has gone into the kitchen. He said, 'For the next fifty years, let Mother India be our

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[1] *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, Vol. I, (1965) pp. 177-8.

[2] *The Master as I Saw Him*, Sister Nivedita ; Udbodhan Office, Calcutta 3, 1948 ed., p. 175.

[3] *Complete Works*, Vol. III, (1948) , p. 194.

only God. For that time let all other vain gods disappear from our minds. What vain gods shall we go after and yet cannot worship the God that we see all round us... everywhere His hands, everywhere His feet, everywhere His ears....'[4] Fifty years later, India got independence.

With his stirring message, he brought out the potentialities of many persons. People became fired with his ideas. In one of his letters to a Western disciple, he gave out his real purpose : 'My ideal can be put into a few words and that is : to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.... Awake, awake, great one! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers to the call.... I never make plans. Plans grow and work themselves. I only say, awake, awake!'[5] His idea was simply to bring out the divine potentiality of man. That is the important thing—to bring out the inner strength, the inner fire, the sleeping God within.

All saints, all spiritually powerful persons do the same thing. The important thing is not the instructions which they give; it is their power to bring out your inner potentiality, the fire within you. Śaṅkarācārya said in one of his hymns : If you come into contact with a true saint, in a moment your whole life will be transformed. This is not poetic exaggeration. When you see a man of God—not a saint created by votes, by organization—if you come into contact with a real man of God, at once you get a glimpse of what religion means. Everybody has some idea of perfection. We talk of perfection, of the ethical virtues and spiritual disciplines which lead to perfection; but we take for granted that these things are to be talked about and not put into practice. But all of a sudden we find a person who is truly the embodiment of perfection. To see that phenomenon is itself a great thing. It changes our outlook, though we ourselves may not be conscious of it. When we come near a fire, we get the warmth. It is bound to have some influence on our lives.

A true teacher does not have to preach through lectures, through words. He can communicate without the medium of words. It is said in Vedanta that a true teacher speaks through silence, and people get the inspiration. That is extremely true. Most of us find it hard to believe because we have not come into contact with such personalities. We are accustomed to hear something about religion every Sunday and then forget it. That is all our religion, a little nervous excitement. But when a true teacher comes, he does not need to communicate through the medium of words. His presence is enough.

Such teachers can transmit spiritual power directly. Christ gave power to his disciples. St. Peter gave power through the laying on of hands. Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave power by his words. They are not ordinary words. Through those words, embodied in the *Gītā*, Arjuna's life was transformed. And through the *Gītā* millions of lives have been transformed and are being transformed, so much power and fire is embedded in those instructions. Buddha also had that power. It was not simply his words. His very presence radiated spiritual power. Just after his enlightenment, he met his former disciples who had left him because he had eaten something, saying that Buddha had given himself up to luxury. Their idea was that a spiritual aspirant should eat almost nothing. When they met Buddha in Benares after his realization, they saw him from a distance and were saying among themselves,

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4 Ibid. p. 300.

5 *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, 1948 ed., pp. 320-21.

'Oh, here is that rogue. When he comes, we shall not pay him any respect. He has fallen from the path.' But when he came near them, at once they stood up with great respect. His very appearance indicated that he was altogether changed. Still, they wanted to take liberty with him. They addressed him by his family name. But he said, 'I am no longer Śākyamuni. I am altogether different.' And Buddha transformed so many lives. So did Caitanya. So did Śaṅkarācārya.

And so did Ramakrishna in the present age. In his case, these incidents are accurately recorded. We are not sure whether the records about Christ are altogether genuine—how much is imagination, how much is the exaggeration of devotees. We do not know how much of the life and teachings of Buddha is fact, how much is legend or fiction. But the details of Ramakrishna's life have been recorded by persons who were highly educated and extremely conscientious, with a sense of responsibility to posterity.

Ramakrishna by his very presence could give spiritual realization. He did so to several of his disciples. By a touch he could give what is called *samādhi,* the superconscious state. He would not always teach through words. Once there came to him a great scholar, who was very philosophically minded. By hearing Ramakrishna sing some songs, that scholar was moved to tears. He said pathetically to the Master, 'By studying philosophy my heart has become dried up. Can you tell me how my heart will melt in devotion ? ' He was not aware of it, but his heart had already melted in devotion. His eyes were moist with tears. Such transformations of character are not simply figments of the imagination. These things can happen and do happen in religious life, if you come into contact with a real man of God.

Such things happen even in secular life, even in the political field. If a political leader really feels anguish for the misery of his country, when he speaks thousands listen to him, thousands are ready to sacrifice everything and follow him. At the call of Mahatma Gandhi—a man without prepossessing appearance, wearing only a loincloth—literally thousands of people began to defy the laws of government, and soon the jails were filled up. The government could not construct buildings quickly enough to accommodate all of them.

In secular life also, when a person has real fire within him, he can kindle fire in others. For example, let us take a professor who has really found joy in his subject. Ordinary professors are mere tutors, I would say. They can coach the students and help them to get good grades, but they are not real professors. A real professor, whatever his subject, whether it be poetry or history or science, has entered into the real spirit of his subject and has found great joy in it. If a student studies only one hour under such a professor, that will be sufficient to inspire him with love for the subject. Afterwards it is a matter of labour, a matter of details.

The same thing is true of an artist or a musician. An artist who has entered into the spirit of his subject becomes altogether different. He becomes almost saint-like in his one-pointedness of concentration and indifference to worldly gain. I knew a great artist who taught in Tagore's university. He was as much a philosopher as an artist. He was such a great man, but so simple. He had found the real soul of art, and he could inspire many, many persons. He could bring out the artistic fire from within his students.

Some persons have spontaneous fire from their childhood, others have not. Among students, some have that fire, some have not. Some students are busy with making good grades, so that they can get good jobs.

They have no other goal in life. There is absolutely no idealism, no fire in them. But some persons are sensitive to what is going on around them; they respond to the good and evil in their environment. From their education they find some ideas to put into practice in life, some ideal to follow.

In our day, some persons embraced the religious life; others went into politics at the call of Mahatma Gandhi. I remember one student who was junior to me. He was calm and quiet but very sturdy. He would not speak much. I thought he had some idealism but I did not discuss it with him. I knew he had some political leanings. Afterwards he joined Gandhi's political movement. Once, on the occasion of a certain day celebrating the struggle for independence, he wrote an article. Though I was in a monastery, I read his article with great interest. He wrote: Another year is gone. When shall we get independence? I was so impressed by how much it was gnawing at his heart. And in his lifetime independence came.

There are some persons who can feel and think very deeply. Such persons can move mountains, they can make the impossible possible. All have not that fire. Some have no fire at all. Their whole interest is in the bread-and-butter things of life. Then the question is: can those who have no fire develop fire within them? That is the most important thing to know.

Yes, I believe this fire *can* be developed. But in order to do that, one must be able to appreciate the idealism in others. Some persons are so gross that they cannot even appreciate the finer qualities in others. But those who can appreciate idealism in others have the potentiality to develop it within themselves. You see, when we appreciate a thing, we have a silent longing for that. Longing gives us the motive power to struggle.

Then what is the method? The first thing necessary is to be conscientious. Whatever might be our defects, if we deliberately try to obey the voice of conscience, we will begin to develop inner strength. Conscience is the voice of God. Socrates said: This voice of God is dormant within every one of us; but because we do not listen to it, it becomes dull, deadened, altogether gone. What is needed is just to follow our inner voice, to make an attempt to put into practice what we know to be right.

In the very nature of things, you will not succeed completely all at once. If you succeed ten per cent, that is enough to begin with. Here, don't indulge in philosophical discussions about what is right and what is wrong. When you spend your time in philosophical discussions, that means you do not like to do anything. Instead of that, whatever you know to be right, try to follow into practice, without being disheartened even if you fail many times. You need not consult a philosopher or go into a debate. What you feel within, that is enough.

Your greatest treasure is to be true to yourself, to be loyal to yourself. It is a great humiliation, a great degradation not even to attempt to do what you know to be right. But if you make the attempt, gradually the capacity to follow your conscience will increase more and more. You will hear the voice of God more and more clearly, and with that will come strength within you. Because we do not follow our conscience, that voice does not become imperative in our lives. To be true to ourselves is the one thing we should do, and it is not so difficult to do. If we really want to grow spiritually, if we 'mean business', as they say, we must try to do that.

That attempt itself will bring out the fire within us, bring out the energy, the idealism, the courage, the right outlook. We will see clearly that ideals are much more important, much more real than material things. Material things are constantly changing; about

material things there are differences of opinion. But if we follow our conscience, our ideals will become clear as a great call, like Constantine seeing the cross in the sky. Our ideals will be clear, and with those ideals will come the inspiration and the strength to struggle for them.

Fire can be brought out also by cultivating some ethical virtues. Some ethical virtues, I say, but any one ethical virtue is enough if you try to follow it into practice. For instance, truth. It is normal for a human being to be truthful, to be true to himself. But in society we become so accustomed to seeing persons practising falsehood, we think that to follow truth is unnatural, abnormal, foolish, not worldly-wise. We think those who are truthful are not fit to live in the world. But without listening to the majority verdict, one should try to practise truth. It will be difficult: because it is difficult it is valuable, or because it is valuable it is difficult. If one tries to follow truth—I say *tries* to, *struggles* to do that—gradually power will come.

Mahatma Gandhi followed two principles, truth and non-violence. Non-violence means love for one and all. Invariably try to give love for hatred. If you can do that, your power will increase greatly. You will become calm and serene if you simply practise that. From inner light there will come great strength. It will come if one steadfastly practises any ethical virtue.

There are several virtues which one should normally practise. One is non-injury or non-violence, or, in a positive way, love for one and all. To practise that is so effective. In the beginning it is difficult, in the beginning you cannot call up sufficient courage; but if you persevere, you will get the result. You will have fewer and fewer enemies, and more and more inner joy. And as results come, you will be practising this virtue more and more. Another virtue one should cultivate is forgiveness. Another is dedicated service to others. In one's own small sphere, if one just tries to help others, in however humble a way, gradually the spirit of service will increase, the capacity to serve will increase, the tendency to serve will increase, and gradually one will be transformed.

One can kindle the fire more easily if one comes into contact with persons who live the spiritual life or try to live that life. Holy association, association even with persons who are struggling for the ideal, is a great help. To meet those who have succeeded completely is difficult. But association with those who are struggling to reach the ideal gives one great inspiration.

If one cannot find such persons, one can turn to the scriptures—not simply for intellectual reading, not for reading as poetry, but for inspiration and guidance in spiritual life. Someone told me, the Upaniṣads are great poetry. They are not poetry. When we feel some experience very strongly, we spontaneously try to express it in poetic form. So the seers of the Upaniṣads expressed their realizations in poetic form, in hymns and songs. Many saints have written songs and hymns; they came as a spontaneous overflow of their great feeling.

These words of the saints and seers are for putting into practice, not just for reading. Reading is useless if you do not try to put what you read into practice. Much reading is not necessary for your practical spiritual purpose. Read the *Gītā* or the Bible and find out any passage which appeals to you. Read and think on that passage, read and think. If you begin to think seriously, you will find what deep meaning is hidden there. Those who read scripture in an ordinary way, intellectually, to find the philological or historical meaning, miss the real purpose of the scriptures. But if an ordinary person, without much education, simply reads a scriptural passage and tries to put that into practice, he will find

deeper and deeper meaning, he will find guidance for his daily actions, for his daily life.

One is bound to get results that way. First, reading; then thinking; then practising. We get greater meaning when we try to practise. When you read scriptures intellectually you get one meaning. When you have spiritual aspiration and turn to the scriptures for guidance, you will find another meaning. You are beset by some problem which you cannot solve, which nobody else can solve. If you turn to scripture, you will find here or there some passage which seems as if it were meant for you and you only, for the time being. And as you try to put that passage into practise, you will find greater and greater, deeper and deeper meaning. Fire is increased by putting fuel into it. By putting teachings into practice we put fuel into our inner fire, and the fire increases from more to more. just as desire increases by fulfilling desire, spiritual fire also increases by putting scriptural teachings into action.

That is the start. But even though it is only a beginning, it is a great blessing. You have found out your way. Afterwards you simply pursue it. In the beginning your spiritual life might seem like just a trickle of water—some spiritual idea, some spiritual feeling, flowing like a small stream in the woods. But as it continues, it widens and deepens until it becomes a great river, and afterwards it carries you to the ocean, if you simply continue with it.

One must continue, one must not be careless, until the goal is reached. When you succeed a little, there comes satisfaction; there comes lethargy, too. But one should not rest satisfied in spiritual life. In worldly life, if you are satisfied after certain things have been accomplished, it is good for you; then you can turn your attention to higher things. In spiritual life, one should not be satisfied; one should try to progress and progress until the highest state is reached.

The goal of spiritual life is to find out your real relationship with God. Many persons are satisfied if they have a little devotion. It does not occur to them that if there is a God, why they should be praying to Him from a distance. If God is a reality, why should we be satisfied simply to find that He answers our prayers? We should want to see the blazing light, to see God face to face. If there is a God to whom we pray, why should we be satisfied simply with praying? We must see Him as a fact, as a direct experience.

What did the saints do? From the start their idea was not just to live a spiritual life. That is a stage. But why should we be satisfied with the first stage, with the first step? You live the spiritual life in order to find out the goal of life. You must not be satisfied unless and until the highest goal is reached.

Ramakrishna used to make fun of persons who are wishy-washy in character. He would say they are like docile bulls who, if you touch their tails, at once lie flat on the ground. They have no life, as it were. But some bulls, if you touch their tails, begin to frisk about. In the same way, some persons are born with high aspirations, or they have been able to increase their aspirations tremendously. Ramakrishna would compare them to certain mythical birds who soar high in the sky, not coming into contact with the world. In the sky they lay their eggs, and the eggs begin to fall towards the earth. As the eggs are falling they hatch. When the young chicks open their eyes and realize that they are plummeting toward the earth, they fly back up into the sky toward their parents.

There are some persons who, when they come into contact with the world, see and reject the ego-centred values of worldly life. They want to live for spiritual ideals, and

to have their ideals fulfilled. Not that they want to escape from the world; spiritual ideals and spiritual fulfilment also include serving humanity. They only truly serve humanity who have realized what man really is. They truly serve both God and man—man as an individual and man in society—because they are full of love, they have no selfishness.

Ordinary work in the world is always motivated by some selfish purpose, such as lust for power or desire for name and fame. With such motives, people cannot do really good work. If they solve one problem they will create other problems. They will incite envy and jealousy, or they will be so oppressive that people will revolt against them. But those persons who realize the goal automatically serve humanity. Forget the idea that to live an intensely spiritual life is selfishness. It is an old, rotten superstition. Because people are attached to the world and cannot rise higher in their aspirations, they say such things.

When one has spiritual aspiration, one should follow it into practice to the last limit. In spiritual life there must be energy, there must be fire, and it should be constantly increased, constantly fed with practice and fulfilment. As one tries to fulfil one's aspirations, they gain momentum. Momentum increases and increases until the goal is reached. When one follows this path, one feels and knows what it is to have real fire. One gets the fulfilment of life's aspiration and becomes blessed.

There have been plenty of examples of such persons, but we do not take notice of them, nor does history take any notice of them. At best, historians note a little religious influence at a certain time. They do not give any importance to saints. The pages of history are filled up with descriptions of the political, economic, social and military aspects of human life. The lives of saints do not find much accommodation in the pages of history. But it does not matter. The saints find out the true meaning of life. They are blessings to humanity, even if humanity ignores them.

But all men do not ignore them. The fire of man's spiritual aspiration is still burning. Those who have reached the goal have left behind the memory of their example. From the inspiration of their lives, we can kindle the fire within us and make our lives blessed. It is up to us.

HOW IS A MAN REBORN ?

SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

(Heredity and environment are not adequate
to account for a man's birth and growth.)

1. THE WORLD-WIDE ACCEPTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF REINCARNATION IS DUE TO ITS REASONABLENESS.

The doctrine of reincarnation is avowed particularly by Hinduism and Buddhism. It affirms the rebirth of a man in a new human body until he gets free from all attachment to the temporal. There are subtle differences between the Hindu and the Buddhist view of reincarnation. I shall dwell on the subject from the Hindu viewpoint, that is to say, from the viewpoint of Vedanta. The belief in the transmigration of the soul has not been confined to Hinduism and Buddhism. Clear evidences of this belief are to be found in Greek thought, in the Zoroastrian scriptures, in the teachings of the Essenes, of the Pharisees, of the early Fathers of the Christian Church, such as Justin Martyr, St. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and also of the Sufi mystics and poets. Primitive and tribal races in different regions of the world also hold to this belief. From the very beginning the human race has been confronted with the mysteries of birth as well as of death. Where does man come from ? Where does he go ? These are the natural enquiries of the human mind.

With the belief in man's future existence there has been belief in his past existence as well. The words of Jesus Christ corroborate the doctrine of rebirth. Referring to John the Baptist he says : 'And if ye will receive *it,* this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.'[1] Existence after death presupposes existence before birth. What is beyond death must be beyond birth. Its origination as well as destruction does not depend on the physical body.

The Scottish philosopher and historian, David Hume (1711-1776), observes,

> 'The soul, therefore, if immortal, existed before our birth ; and if the former existence no way concerned us, neither will the latter.... The Metempsychosis is therefore the only system of this kind that philosophy can hearken to.'[2]

So says Swami Vivekananda :

> 'If you are going to exist in eternity hereafter, it must be that you have existed through eternity in the past ; it cannot be otherwise.'[3]

Eternal existence with a beginning is absurd. What begins in time must end in time.

The doctrine of reincarnation is a complement to the doctrine of karma. Man is reborn for the fulfilment of his karma. As he sows, so he reaps. The law of karma is the chain that ties man to the wheel of birth and rebirth. It is through karma that man is bound. And it is through karma that he can get free. Karma proves to be the cause of his bondage as long as a man clings to the temporal, but when he turns to the Eternal, karma opens the way to freedom. The twofold doctrine is based on a comprehensive and consistent view of human personality comprising its present, past, and future. It accounts for the settled facts of life. Being a rational interpretation

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1 Matt. XI. 14, 15.

2 *Essays by David Hume,* 'The Immortality of the Soul', George Routledge and Sons Ltd, London, pp. 424-27.

3 *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* 1963 Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, Vol. II, p. 218.

of the drama of life and its mysteries, the doctrine has commended itself to the great thinkers of the world from ancient time to the modern age. Indeed, the doctrine of reincarnation, a sequence of the law of karma, has its supporters among the world's theologians, philosophers, mystics, scientists, poets, and psychologists : Writing on *Reincarnation and Karma, a Spiritual Philosophy Applied to the World Today,* L. Stanley Jost, Chief Librarian, Manchester, England, observes :

> 'The basic testimony to the truth of reincarnation is of a purely intellectual order. It rests on the ability of the conception to give significance and meaning to what would otherwise be without either, and this is the only kind of evidence of any truth, whether in the world of phenomena or the world of thought, which has ultimate value. It can be deduced from rigorous logic from the most elementary assumption of a moral order in the universe, and without *that* assumption there is not even a universe : there is merely a monstrous futility or a colossal nightmare.'[4]

2. THE RECOLLECTION OF ONE'S PAST LIFE AND ITS VERIFICATION.

The fact that we do not remember the previous lives we lived does not disprove the doctrine of reincarnation. It is often argued : if we lived before as human beings why do we not remember our past incarnations ? Since we do not remember them the theory of reincarnation is not acceptable. But the point is, our existence or non-existence does not depend on our memory. We do not have the recollection of our childhood days even. Does it mean we did not exist as children ? We are liable to forget early periods of this very life. No wonder we do not remember our former life or lives. And it is a great blessing that we do not. Otherwise our present existence would have been complicated to the extreme. There would have been many a pretender, to say the least.

Even though human beings in general are oblivious of their previous lives, yet there have been exceptional cases of individuals in ancient and modern times who had memories of their past incarnation or incarnations. In many instances their recollections of past lives were verified.[5] According to Patañjali by a special method of meditation a person can awaken the memories of his past life. As stated in his *Yoga-aphorisms* : 'As a result of the perception of

[4] *Reincarnation, An East-West Anthology,* Compiled and Edited by Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston. The Julian Press, Inc., New York, 1961, p. 161.

[5] It may not be out of place to record from personal knowledge an authentic case of intuitive memory of past life. In 1935 when I was in New Delhi I heard from a reliable friend, a teacher of Sanskrit in a high school, that a brahmin girl of nine, Shanti Devi by name, who had been living with her parents in the old city, had memories of her former life since she had been a child. The secretary of the local Y.M.C.A. personally requested me to investigate the matter and ascertain the truth. But because of my preoccupation as the leader of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama in New Delhi I could not take up the investigation. Not long after that I had to leave the city to make arrangements for my journey to the United States.

I gathered from different sources that since the girl had been five years old she would remark from time to time with regard to certain food and dress, 'I have eaten this before', 'I have put on this before.' The mother paid little attention to the child's prattle. But as she grew up she spoke more definitely of her experiences in past life. She often asserted that she had lived in Muthra (a city about 150 miles to the south-east of Delhi), that her husband was a cloth merchant, that she remembered his name but would not give it out (because an orthodox Hindu woman does not as a rule utter the husband's name). A grand uncle elicited from her the name and address of the husband, who was not a brahmin, and who even came to Delhi when the case was related to him. He was accompanied by his son, who was one year older than Shanti Devi. As she saw the son she was deeply moved.

subliminal impressions one gains the knowledge of former lives.'[6] The Sanskrit term for such recollection is *jāti-smara.* The Buddha is said to have remembered all his past lives.[7] Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks of the past incarnations: 'O Arjuna, many are the lives I have passed through and thou too. But I know them all, whilst thou knowest not, O Scorcher of foes.'[8]

3. A CLEAR KNOWLEDGE OF MAN'S PRESENT EXISTENCE IS THE KEY TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PAST AS WELL AS HIS FUTURE EXISTENCE.

It is by knowing what man is and how he lives that we can determine where he comes from and where he goes. Without understanding his real nature we cannot understand what his birth or death really means. It has been well said that man is the central fact in all investigation.

A careful study of a human being and the allied facts points to the truth that man is not just a physical, or a biophysical, or a psychophysical being. The real man is the knowing self, the central principle of consciousness, which is the unchanging witness of the changing conditions of the body, the organs, the mind, and the external world. The indwelling self is the only constant factor in human personality that integrates all the physical and the psychical factors into a coherent whole and co-ordinates the diverse functions of the mind, the organs, and the body. It maintains the identity of man despite all changes, external and internal. Man is essentially immortal spirit ever shining and that is mainly responsible for the livingness of the psychophysical organism. 'He is the life of life', says the Upaniṣad with regard to the real man.[9]

It is because of the real self of the nature of pure consciousness that every individual knows spontaneously that he is. He is aware of his own existence and the existnce of all else that comes in his way. It is this self-awareness that distinguishes all sentient creatures from material things. It is self-evident. It requires no proof. Being of contrary nature the changeless luminous self cannot derive from the body, the organs, or the mind, or their functions. It is fundamental. It exists in the psychophysical organism from the very beginning. It is the sole regulatory principle of the changeful heterogeneous factors in an individual. Its presence is the antecedent condition of the purposive behaviour of a living being. Wherever is livingness there is sentiency. Devoid of consciousness, explicit or implicit, any physical organization must be either a mechanical device or a material structure. Herein is the basic difference between the living and the non-living.

Being immutable the self is beyond birth, growth, decay, and death. It is not born with the birth of the body, nor does it die when the body drops. As declared by Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

> 'This (the self) is never born, nor does it die. It is not that not having been it again comes into being. (Or, it is not that having been it again ceases to be).

It was known upon enquiry that the mother of this boy died in a hospital in Muthra in 1925, shortly after giving birth to the son. Shanti Devi was born in Delhi in 1926. To verify the case a party of about ten noteworthy citizens, including the editor of a local daily paper, a commissioner of Delhi Municipality, and a college professor, went by train to Muthra accompanied by Shanti Devi, who had never been there before in this life. They discovered that Shanti Devi was well acquinted with the place and knew many details of the house where she claimed to have lived in her past life. She also visited her former parents and had no difficulty in finding the house where they lived even then.

6 *Yoga-Sūtra,* III. 18.

7 Vide *Samannaphala Sutta.*

8 *Bhagavad-Gīta,* IV. 5. (In subsequent references the abbreviation BG will be used.)

9 *Kena Upaniṣad,* I. 2.

> This is unborn, eternal, changeless, though ancient ever new. It is not killed when the body is killed.'[10]

4. NEITHER THE SELF NOR THE MIND IS INHERITABLE.

Now the question arises: Where does the self of a human offspring come from? The unborn self cannot originate either from the male or the female parent. Not the parent's body, nor the mind, nor any of the ten organs, none of which has consciousness inherent in it, can generate the luminous self, which is of contrary nature. It is absurd that the self of the child will emerge from the father's or the mother's self, which is indivisible and immutable. Modern biology recognizes the mind but not the self. But without the recognition of the self, an unvarying spiritual principle in the psychophysical organism, the integration of the ever shifting physical and psychical factors and their processes and also the direction of the whole towards a definite end remain unexplained. As observed by Edmund Sinnott:

> 'What pulls together the separate parts and processes of a plant or animal and knits them into an organism, and what draws this organism toward a developmental goal prefigured in its living stuff —these are the problems where the confident progress of biology has made but little headway.'[11]

It is equally impossible for the child to inherit the mind from either parent. An individual's mind is distinct from the self and the body as well, although closely associated with both. These three constituents connot be identified with one another. Mental states and functions are other than those of the body and organs. None of the organs can function unless the mind joins with it. But the mind can function even when the organs and the body are inoperative. It is through the mind conjoined with the senses that the self perceives physical objects. An individual functions as an organized system because of the co-ordination of these three primal constituents—the self, the mind, and the body. There can be no living organism without their correlation. The three exist as distinct principles from its inception. None of the three derives from the two others. Living processes are invariably psychophysical. A plan for self-development is immanent in the very embryo. With the plan there must be a planner. 'It is *as if* an immanent principle inspired each cell with knowledge for the carrying out of a design,' says Sir Charles Sherrington, the eminent physiologist.[12] Unlike the physical body the mind is impartible. It is too subtle to be broken into parts. Amputation of the body does not cause the amputation of mind. The receptacle of the mind remains the same while the contents change. It is the identity of the mind that maintains one's individuality beyond death and rebirth. Hence the child's mind cannot be a fragment of the parental mind. Nor can it arise from either parent's body or the self, being different by nature from both. What the offspring actually receives from the parents are the rudiments of its physical body. These can serve as the medium for the transmission of the parents' physical characteristics to the offspring more or less. Can the child's mind and the self as well develop from this physical source? If not, where do they come from?

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10 BG II. 20.

11 Edmund W. Sinnott: *The Bridge of Life* (From Matter to Spirit), Simon and Schuster, New York, 1966, p. 128.

12 Sherrington: *Man on His Nature,* Gifford Lectures, 1937-38 (C.U.P.). Quoted by Raynor C. Johnson: *The Imprisoned Splendour*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1953, p. 55.

5. The meaning of heredity. The individual variations must have a real cause. These cannot be a matter of chance.

The doctrine of reincarnation recognizes the general biological law that 'like begets like.' Humans are born of human parents, elephants of elephant parents, ants of ant parents. The same is true of plant life. A fig tree originates from another fig tree, an apple tree from another apple tree. Rose plants grow from rose plants. A living thing comes from another living thing of the same species and never from lifeless matter. This property of self-reproduction common to all living things is known as heredity. It differentiates a living thing from non-living matter. It is because of a vital difference between the two that the one cannot derive from the other. I quote below modern biologists' definitions of heredity:

> *Heredity, in the last analysis, is self-reproduction,* the common property of all life and the property that distinguishes living from non-living matter.' [13]
>
> 'Each new generation of organisms closely resembles its parents ; the mating of two cats always produces cats and the mating of two Siamese cats always produces Siamese cats and not a different variety. Certain distinctive characteristics appear frequently in successive generations of a given family tree. Man has been aware for many centuries that "like begets like" and that new types of animals and plants may result when unlike forms are crossed. This tendency of individuals to resemble their progenitors is called *heredity.*' [14]

This resemblance does not exclude individual variations. Heredity in a wide sense, is inclusive of both similarity and divergence. Every creature despite the resemblance it bears to its progenitors and to other creatures of the same descent, retains its individuality. Indeed, every living being is a distinct individual. What is the cause of this distinctiveness? The basic difference between one individual and another is in their mental constitution, which is not acquired from the parents. Even twin brothers widely differ in their inner nature despite their closest physical resemblance. Every individual brings his own mind and develops in his own way. The root cause of variation is in the inner nature of the living being and not in environmental conditions. Modern genetics has not been able to find a satisfactory solution of the problem of variations.

Vedanta does not contradict modern biologists' delineation of the process of human reproduction so far as the body of the offspring is concerned, but does not consider it an adequate explanation of the origin of the offspring as a whole. Had an individual been primarily a body instinct with life then the transmission of the parents' physical particles through the reproductive cells might account for his origination. But far more important than the body are his mind and the self, neither of which can be attributed to his parents as already explained. Even for his body the parents cannot be held wholly responsible. Its roots are to be traced to his past life. A human being cannot result from chance conjunction of material units, that is to say, the physical ingredients of the reproductive cells of the parents, the sperm and the ovum.

6. Human reproduction according to modern biology.

According to modern biology the human body like other multicellular living things, plants or animals, consists of innumerable minute cells, which are responsible for its

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[13] *Principles of Genetics,* Edmund IV. Sinnott. L. C. Dunn, Theodosius Dobzhansky. Fifth edition, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. New York, 1958, p. 2.

[14] Claude A. Villee: *Biology,* fourth edition, W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1962, p. 452.

structure and function. Each cell is a miniature organism and is regarded as the fundamental unit of life. 'New cells come into being by the division of previously existing cells.' As noted by Dr. Villee, 'The cell theory includes the concept that the cell is the fundamental unit of both function and structure—the fundamental unit that shows all the characteristics of living things.'[15] Other than the ordinary body cells are the germ cells, which have the property of reproduction. The reproductive cell in the male body is called the *sperm* and the reproductive cell in the female body is called the *ovum* or *egg*. The common name for both is the *gamete*. The sperm is smaller but more active than the egg. Neither is observable by the naked eye. Each gamete is a single cell.

While the acquired traits of parents belong to the body cells, their inherited characteristics belong to the gametes—the egg and the sperm. So the inherited characteristics are transmitted to the offspring but not the acquired traits according to the present-day biologists. This refutes the former Lamarckian view that the acquired characteristics of parents and the hereditary as well are inherited by the offspring. The German zoologist, August Weismann, contended for the first time that 'acquired' characters are never inherited. His view has prevailed since then being supported by evidence.

Inside the reproductive cell there are rod-shaped bodies called the *chromosomes*. In each cell of the human species there are twenty-four pairs of chromosomes.[16] Within the chromosomes lie the hypothetical material units called the *genes*. Each one of the genes controls the inheritance of one or more characteristics. They are generally known as heredity units. As noted by William Beck:

> 'No one could examine a naked gene, for its properties were assayable only by genetic analysis of the progeny. It itself remained an inferred entity and a thoroughly remarkable one, for its small size and durability suggested that its material construction must be startlingly complex in detail.'[17]

That the theory of genetic inheritance is founded on assumption is acknowledged by other biologists:

> 'It should be clearly understood that we are sure of the existence of genes not because we have seen them or analyzed them chemically (genetics has so far not succeeded in doing either of these things), but because Mendel's laws can be satisfactorily understood only on the assumption that genes exist. For the purpose of studying the inheritance of traits, it is sufficient to define the gene as a unit transmitted from parents to offspring, which is responsible for the development of certain characters in individuals living in certain environments. The gene so defined is a hypothetical unit, and the body of knowledge concerned with these genes has come to be known as *formal genetics*. The theory of formal genetics could have been developed even if chromosomes had been unknown and the microscope did not exist.'[18]

Indeed, the only common link between the child and its parents is its genetic constitution. At copulation numerous sperm and ova are let loose. Two of them—one sperm and one ovum—perchance meet and bring about a new germ-cell called the zygote, the fertilized egg, which develops into an individual in due course. It is said that 'only one of the millions of sperm deposited at each ejaculation fertilizes a single egg.'[19] Thus, according to current biology the starting point of an individual's life is the zygote

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15 Ibid. p. 35.

16 Since 1956 the number counted is twenty-three pairs.

17 *Modern Science and the Nature of life*, by William S. Beck. Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1957, p. 214.

18 *Principles of Genetics*, pp. 54-55.

19 Claude A. Villee : *Biology*, p. 424.

produced by the fusion of the nuclei of the male and the female reproductive cell. The fertilized egg contains twelve pairs of chromosomes from the male parent and twelve pairs from the female parent. The hereditary units, the genes, of both the parents lie within them. The chromosomes and the genes function as a single unit. To quote contemporary biologists:

> 'From the very beginning, at fertilization, the body possesses a highly developed structure, or organization. As the development proceeds this organization undergoes an orderly series of changes, leading by stages to the formation of a fetus and then of an adult body.'
>
> 'The only material objects that one inherits biologically from one's parents are the genes carried in the egg and sperm cells from which the body originates.'[20]
>
> 'Indeed, the nuclei of egg and sperm, these tiny packets of reproductive substance, into which so much is packed and out of which so much emerges, are the most remarkable bits of living matter in existence.'[21]

In explaining the origin and development of an individual the biologists have had recourse to both assumption and chance. Says Dobzhansky:

> 'A child receives one-half of the genes of his father and one-half of the maternal ones; which particular maternal and paternal genes are transmitted to a given child is a matter of chance. Which mutations occur, and when and where, is also a matter of chance.'[22]

7. MODERN BIOLOGY GIVES NO SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION OF THE BIRTH OF A GENIUS OR A MORON.

According to Julian Huxley it is a matter of chance. Says he:

> 'Egg and sperm carry the destiny of generations. The egg realizes one chance combination out of an infinity of possibilities, and it is confronted with millions of pairs of sperms, each one actually different in the combination of cards which it holds. Then comes the final moment in the drama—the marriage of egg and sperm to produce the beginning of a large individual.... Here, too, it seems to be entirely a matter of chance which particular union of all the millions of possible unions shall be consummated. One might have produced a genius, another a moron ... and so on ... with a realization of all that this implies, we can banish from human thought a host of fears and superstitions. No basis now remains for any doctrine of metempsychosis.'[23]

To hold that the birth of a genius or a moron is the result of a chance union of sperm and egg, as Julian Huxley does, is a plausible explanation of a known fact. It is tantamount to saying, 'I do not know the real cause.' To attribute a universally observable fact to chance in this cosmic order regulated by the law of cause and effect is indicative of one's inability to probe into deeper realms of existence. To have recourse to chance is worse than submission to fatalism. Just as the biologists cannot explain certain observable facts of life without the assumption of something, e.g., gene, which is beyond the range of observation, similarly, there are established facts in the sensible universe composed of the living and the non-living, which cannot be explained without the recognition of subtle realities, such as mind and spirit that are beyond the ken of the senses but are graspable by reason and open to suprasensuous vision.

According to the doctrine of karma, nowhere in the universe is there room for chance, neither in the domain of the animate nor in the domain of the inanimate. Nothing hap-

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20 *Principles of Genetics*, p. 7.

21 Ibid. p. 17.

22 *The Biology of Ultimate Concern*, by Theodosius Dobzhansky. The New American Library, Inc. New York, N.Y., 1967, p. 126.

23 Julian Huxley: *What dare I think* (1931). Quoted in *Reincarnation: An East and West Anthology*, pp. 292-3.

pens without a cause. As is the cause so is the effect. The effect corresponds to the cause. The law of karma on which the doctrine of reincarnation is based is the cosmic law of cause and effect functioning on the human plane as a moral law. As we sow so we reap. Neither heredity nor environment, not even their interaction, can explain the birth and growth of an individual. Further, geniuses are born of mediocre parents, morons of normal parents, sane children of insane parents, wicked children of saintly parents. Only the law of karma can account for these anomalies. The point is, the child comes to the parents and is not begotten by them. The prime factor in the origination and development of an individual is the individual himself, all else is subsidiary to him. This is particularly evident in the case of young prodigies. The world has witnessed not a few of them in both East and West in all ages. We shall mention only two instances during the historical period.

Śaṅkarācārya, the greatest exponent of Advaita Vedanta, lived only thirty-two years (686-718 A.D.). At the age of seven he mastered the Vedic literature, which is a library in itself. His erudite preceptor was astounded by the pupil's genius. The profound scholarship and wisdom of young Śaṅkara won the admiration of one and all. His fame extended far and wide. The King of Kerala came to pay him respects. At the age of nine he embraced monasticism. And he attained *nirvikalpa samadhi*, the apex of spiritual realization, before he was twelve. Most of his literary works, the masterpieces of Advaita Vedanta, were composed by the time he was sixteen. A versatile genius—a seer, a philosopher, a saint, an indefatigable religious reformer, a poet, a prose-writer *par excellence*, a spiritual teacher of the highest order, young Śaṅkara made the Vedic religion invincible. His great achievements within a short span of thirty-two years are the marvels of the world.

The Scottish philosopher, Sir William Hamilton, who lived from 1788 to 1856 A.D., proved in his youth to be a marvellous prodigy of modern times. It is said that he started to learn Hebrew at the age of three. At the age of seven he was pronounced by one of the Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, to have shown a greater knowledge of language than many candidates for a fellowship. At thirteen he could speak thirteen languages. Among these, besides the classical and modern European languages, were Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Hindustani, and Malayan. At fourteen he wrote a complimentary letter to the Persian Ambassador, who happened to visit Dublin, and the latter said that no one in Britain could have written such a document in the Persian language. At six he could look up from toys and answer a difficult mathematical problem, and when he was eighteen the Astronomer Royal of Ireland, Dr. Brinkley, said of him, 'This young man I do not say *will be* the first mathematician of his age, I say he *is* the first mathematician of his age.'[24]

Evidently, the extraordinary powers of the prodigies are not due to heredity, or environment, or the interaction of the two. These must have been cultivated by the individuals themselves in their former lives. The doctrine of reincarnation maintains the identity of an individual throughout the succession of births and deaths. One and the same individual appears in different physical garbs, but all along retains the same mind, which is separable from the body. His progress is dependent primarily on the development of the mind and secondarily on the development of the body. Modern biology distinguishes the mind from the body but considers it an annex to the body. Conse-

(*Continued on page* 319)

[24] Vide Raynor C. Johnson: *The Imprisoned Splendour*, p. 379. Originally narrated in *North British Review*, September, 1866.

A TRAVELLER LOOKS AT THE WORLD

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

Swami Ranganathananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, went on a world tour in 1968-69, lasting a year and a half. He visited twenty-five countries in both the Americas, Europe, Australia, South-east Asia, and the Far East. He lectured extensively, and had informal meetings with a large cross-section of people in those countries—students, professors, men and women in public life, and devotees.

On his return to India, in conversation with brother-monks at the Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, the Swami answered questions on various interesting topics. These questions, together with his informative and thought-provoking answers, are being published in a series under the above caption. The first instalment follows.

Question : What human trends in the West impressed you most and what distressed you most, and why so ?

Answer : In the West, especially in the United States where I spent a full year of the year-and-a-half, there were many things which really impressed me as they would impress any visitor. The tremendous energy of the people, their hard work, the wonderful wealth that has been built up, their mastery of science and technology—all these are things that really strike a visitor.

But as you have implied in the question, there are also things that distress any visitor. One thing you find is materialism or worldliness in a big way. The philosophy that man pursues through the American civilization today, takes him to be an individual conditioned by his senses. Such a philosophy makes organic satisfactions the highest ideal of man. That is materialism in what you may call the crassest sense. During recent decades America has entered into this spirit of materialism in a big way. Man is just a body and bodily satisfactions are everything. In the beginning the result of this was fine. He became energetic, active and could express himself on the physical level. But at a later stage the evils began to manifest themselves.

Out of these evils have come what Americans call today the sex explosion in America. Any visitor is struck by this dominance of sex. Similarly with crime. These are the two most prominent features of the American scene today : crime and sex. And it is difficult to give an idea of the sex explosion in the United States through this paltry word, so blatant and open it is. This is something very distressing. The glory of woman as a spiritual person is ignored : only the flesh is in the market-place for sale. In industry and advertisement, in the papers, on the radio and everywhere, this has gone to extreme lengths today. There was a play in New York, in which sex was openly demonstrated on the stage itself without any kind of inhibition. Such things are going on even at the universities.

These are some of the features which really distress any visitor, especially from India with its very ancient cultural background and its spiritual understanding of the human personality. But these are only what came to me through newspapers, books and other things. My own personal contacts, on the other hand, were exceptionally fine, because I saw the best of America—students and teachers and citizens.

Question : Among the countries you visited did you come across some thinkers who are aware of the fact that the world's fundamental problem is that of the regeneration of man ? If so, how did these people view the matter ?

Answer : Yes, such sensitive thinkers I did come across. Not only in the United States this time, but also during my earlier visits to European countries—and in several countries of South America, South-east and Far-east Asia. There are people who are really appalled at the degradation of humanity in modern civilization. But one thing I noticed in the West : there is so little understanding of man in depth. There is not the philosophy that gives you a vision of man beyond his sense dimension. They are seeking for it, but they are not able to grasp it clearly. What I noticed, especially in the United States, is that when a writer speaks about the foibles of society today, he is excellent. He gives a telling description of the troubles and sufferings of man today. But as soon as he begins to prescribe a remedy, it often turns out to be worse than the disease. This is true in psychiatry and many other departments of world thought today. It is here that India's thought has something vital to contribute. Indian thought is not going to prescribe do's and don'ts ; it simply opens up a new vision of human dignity and human glory. That is the greatness of Vedanta. When presented in this way it receives instant welcome and respect from thinking people in all these countries.

Question : Is it realized by American leaders of thought that Swami Vivekananda's spiritual ministration to that country was truly prophetic ? In the other words, that in teaching Vedanta and Yoga he gave to that nation the solutions of their problems even before these took the definite shapes they have today ?

Answer : This recognition is slowly coming over the minds of a small group of thinking people today. By and large you do not find much impress of Swami Vivekananda on American society and culture ; but you have to search for it in vital areas. In the decades following Vivekananda's appearance at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, this influence has been great and there are thinkers today who realize that the revolutionary ideas rocking the Christian Churches today, for example the progressive ideas, are in line with Vivekananda's ideas on the subject. Just recently, at the Symposium of Religions in Chicago, in commemoration of the seventy-sixth anniversary of the first Chicago Parliament of Religions, a Catholic leader, Father Robert Campbell, said that the great protest in the Catholic Church today is exactly on the lines envisaged by Vivekananda. This is being recognized by various thinkers who have studied Vivekananda ; but there are many who have not.

Whatever be the open appreciation of the Vedantic position, the need is exactly what Swamiji said it was : that Western civilization should have a spiritual base, and that religions should become broader, with more readiness for dialogue with each other. Now there are people saying what Vedanta has said through Vivekananda and others for the last seventy years. So, slowly, slowly, this is coming to be recognized ; but rather slowly. Americans are so absorbed in their own immediate problems, in their own achievements and in their great technical successes. They have not considered these problems in the light of the great ideas and values of Indian thought. But something is coming in a big way. I say this because almost every TV, radio and newspaper interviewer who interviewed me —and I had nearly ninety such interviews in the country—they asked me the question: How do you explain this tremendous turning to Indian thought on the part of America and Canada today ? This was a normal question.

They do realize, these news media, that there is a turning to the inspiration of the East on the part of the people of the West.

This shows that the work started by Swami Vivekananda—that of spreading Indian ideas, Vedantic ideas, in the West—is gathering force today; and it is increasing day by day. But sometimes it is not the best that goes from this part of the world; sometimes very cheap things also go. By and large they in America want to know about Indian thought in relation to human problems today. Basically, then, it is the spiritual thought of India that they seek. Those who are really thoughtful, those who are really seekers of truth, they come across the best thought of India. Others get something diluted!

Question: How genuine is American interest in Vedanta? Are intellectuals also interested?

Answer: When they come to know of it they are deeply interested. It is not everyone that knows of it. But one good thing is worth noting: the Upaniṣads and *Gītā* are subjects of study in several colleges and universities in the United States. In the United States and Canada alone, I visited and lectured at eighty-four colleges and universities; and altogether, during the tour, I passed through a hundred and fifteen colleges and universities. In many of these I came across students carrying the Upaniṣads in the text. Similarly with the *Gītā*. They are studying it as a subject of real study. They have examinations also in these subjects. At Cleveland State University, I found a whole class studying the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. Students were sitting informally here and there; they tape-recorded the talks, so that they could use them later. The professor, Prof. David Miller, was in Bhubaneshwar for a year and a half. He has great love for Indian thought. He almost lives a spiritual life. He was associated with a Swami in the Bhubaneshwar Ashrama.

So there are such people who have come across Indian thought in a more intimate way and they are very happy to convey the message of India to their students; and the students take deep interest in these courses of study. But very often they do not get the best teachers. Sometimes I saw flimsy ideas of Vedanta and the Upaniṣads given to the students; but that is because they have not got the best type of teachers. However, there is a tremendous interest in Indian thought, specially in the Vedanta, wherever they can find it.

Question: Can American society provide a favourable atmosphere for seriously practising the spiritual disciplines of Vedanta? What are the chances of Vedantic monasticism growing in the West?

Answer: At present there is a great desire among people who know what man's spiritual life is, to get opportunities for living that type of spiritual life. If you organize a retreat, people come. This was evident when the Chicago Vedanta Society announced the purchase of eighty acres of land in the neighbouring State of Michigan. The township in which the land is situated has a significant name—Ganges. When the scheme to establish a spiritual retreat and a monastery in the Ganges township was announced, so great was the interest that people came in a few hundreds to the foundation ceremony on July 26th, 1969. There were professors from the neighbouring universities of Kalamazoo and West Michigan. They said they were very happy to have this beautiful retreat coming up only thirty miles away, which they could utilize for students and teachers.

(*Continued on page* 329)



ILLUMINATING DIALOGUES FROM INDIAN LORE

QUESTIONS WHICH TEND NOT TO EDIFICATION

Thus have I heard.

On a certain occasion The Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvatthi in Jetavana monastery in Anāthapiṇḍaka's Park. Now it happened to the venerable Māluñkyāputta, being in seclusion and plunged in meditation, that a consideration presented itself to his mind, as follows:

'These theories which The Blessed One has left unelucidated, has set aside and rejected,—that the world is eternal, that the world is not eternal, that the world is finite, that the world is infinite, that the soul and the body are identical, that the soul is one thing and the body another, that the saint exists after death, that the saint does not exist after death, that the saint both exists and does not exist after death, that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death, —these The Blessed One does not elucidate to me. And the fact that The Blessed One does not elucidate them to me does not please me nor suit me. Therefore I will draw near to The Blessed One and inquire of him concerning this matter. If The Blessed One will elucidate to me, either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, or that the world is finite, or that the world is infinite, or that the soul and the body are identical, or that the soul is one thing and the body another, or that the saint exists after death, or that the saint does not exist after death, or that the saint both exists and does not exist after death, or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death, in that case will I lead the religious life under The Blessed One. If The Blessed One will not elucidate to me, either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal,... or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death, in that case will I abandon religious training and return to the lower life of a layman.'

Then the venerable Māluñkyāputta arose at eventide from his seclusion, and drew near to where the Blessed One was; and having drawn near and greeted The Blessed One, he sat down respectfully at one side. And seated respectfully at one side, the venerable Māluñkyāputta spoke to The Blessed One as follows:

'Reverend Sir, it happened to me, as I was now in seclusion and plunged in meditation, that a consideration presented itself to my mind, as follows: "These theories which The Blessed One has left unelucidated, has set aside and rejected,—that the world is eternal, that the world is not eternal,... that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death,—these The Blessed One does not elucidate to me. And the fact that The Blessed One does not elucidate

them to me does not please me nor suit me. I will draw near to The Blessed One and inquire of him concerning this matter. If The Blessed One will elucidate to me, either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, ... or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death, in that case *will I lead* the religious life under The Blessed One. If The Blessed One will not elucidate to me, either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, ... or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist ofter death, in that case will I abandon religious training and return to the lower life of a layman.

"If The Blessed One knows that the world is eternal, let The Blessed One elucidate to me that the world is eternal: if The Blessed One knows that the world is not eternal, let The Blessed One elucidate to me that the world is not eternal. If The Blessed One does not know either that the world is eternal or that the world is not eternal, the only upright thing for one who does not know, or who has not that insight, is to say, 'I do not know; I have not that insight.'

"If The Blessed One knows that the world is finite, ...'

"If The Blessed One knows that the saint exists after death, ...'

"If The Blessed One knows that the saint both exists and does not exist after death, let The Blessed One elucidate to me that the saint both exists and does not exist after death; if The Blessed One knows that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death, let The Blessed One elucidate to me that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death. If The Blessed One does not know either that the saint both exists and does not exist after death, or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death, the only upright thing for one who does not know, or who has not that insight, is to say, 'I do not know; I have not that insight'."

'Pray, Māluñkyāputta, did I ever say to you, "Come, Māluñkyāputta, lead the religious life under me, and I will elucidate to you either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, ... or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death"?'

'Nay, verily, Reverend Sir.'

'Or did you ever say to me, "Reverend Sir, I will lead the religious life under The Blessed One, on condition that The Blessed One elucidate to me either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, ... or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death"?'

'Nay, verily, Reverend Sir.'

'So you acknowledge, Māluñkyāputta, that I have not said to you, "Come, Māluñkyāputta, lead the religious life under me and I will elucidate to you either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, ... or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death;" and again that you have not said to me, "Reverend Sir, I will lead the religious life under The Blessed One, on condition that The Blessed One elucidate to me either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, ... or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death." That being the case, vain man, whom are you so angrily denouncing?

'Māluñkyāputta, any one who should say, "I will not lead the religious life under The Blessed One until The Blessed One shall elucidate to me either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, ... or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death,"—that person would die, Māluñkyāputta, before The Tathāgata had ever elucidated this to him.

'It is as if, Māluñkyāputta, a man had been wounded by an arrow thickly smeared with poison, and his friends and companions, his relatives and kinsfolk, were

to procure for him a physician or surgeon; and the sick man were to say, "I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the man who wounded me belonged to the warrior caste, or to the brahmin caste, or to the agricultural caste, or to the menial caste."

'Or again he were to say, "I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt the name of the man who wounded me, and to what clan he belongs."

'Or again he were to say, "I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the man who wounded me was tall, or short, or of the middle height."

'Or again he were to say, "I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the man who wounded me was black, or dusky, or of a yellow skin."

'Or again he were to say, "I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the man who wounded me was from this or that village, or town, or city."

'Or again he were to say, "I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the bow which wounded me was a cāpa, or a kodaṇḍa."

'Or again he were to say, "I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the bow-string which wounded me was made from swallow-wort, or bamboo, or sinew, or maruva, or from milk-weed."

'Or again he were to say, "I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the shaft which wounded me was a kaccha or a ropima."

'Or again he were to say, "I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the shaft which wounded me was feathered from the wings of a vulture, or of a heron, or of a falcon, or of a peacock, or of a sithilahanu."

'Or again he were to say, "I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the shaft which wounded me was wound round with the sinews of an ox, or of a buffalo, or of a ruru deer, or of a monkey."

'Or again he were to say, "I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the arrow which wounded me was an ordinary arrow, or a claw-headed arrow, or a vekaṇḍa, or an iron arrow, or a calf-tooth arrow, or a karavīrapatta." That man would die, Māluñkyāputta, without ever having learnt this.

'In exactly the same way, Māluñkyāputta, any one who should say, "I will not lead the religious life under The Blessed One until The Blessed One shall elucidate to me either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal,... or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death,"—that person would die, Māluñkyāputta, before The Tathāgata had ever elucidated this to him.

'The religious life, Māluñkyāputta, does not depend on the dogma that the world is eternal; nor does the religious life, Māluñkyāputta, depend on the dogma that the world is not eternal. Whether the dogma obtain, Māluñkyāputta, that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, there still remain birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair, for the extinction of which in the present life I am prescribing.

'The religious life, Māluñkyāputta, does not depend on the dogma that the world is finite;...

'The religious life, Māluñkyāputta, does not depend on the dogma that the soul and the body are identical;...

'The religious life, Māluñkyāputta, does not depend on the dogma that the saint exists after death;...

'The religious life, Māluñkyāputta, does not depend on the dogma that the saint both exists and does not exist after death; nor does the religious life, Māluñkyāputta, depend on the dogma that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death. Whe-

ther the dogma obtain, Mālunkyāputta, that the saint both exists and does not exist after death, or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death, there still remain birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair, for the extinction of which in the present life I am prescribing.

'Accordingly, Mālunkyāputta, bear always in mind what it is that I have not elucidated, and what it is that I have elucidated. And what, Mālunkyāputta, have I not elucidated? I have not elucidated, Mālunkyāputta, that the world is eternal; I have not elucidated that the world is not eternal; I have not elucidated that the world is finite; I have not elucidated that the world is infinite; I have not elucidated that the soul and the body are identical; I have not elucidated that the soul is one thing and the body another; I have not elucidated that the saint exists after death; I have not elucidated that the saint both exists and does not exist after death; I have not elucidated that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death. And why, Mālunkyāputta, have I not elucidated this? Because, Mālunkyāputta, this profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, the supernatural faculties, supreme wisdom, and Nirvana; therefore have I not elucidated it.

'And what, Mālunkyāputta, *have I elucidated*? Misery, Mālunkyāputta, have I elucidated; the origin of missery have I elucidated; the cessation of misery have I elucidated; and the path leading to the cessation of misery have I elucidated. And why, Mālunkyāputta, have I elucidated this? Because, Mālunkyāputta, this does profit, has to do with the fundamentals of religion, and tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, knowledge, supreme wisdom, and Nirvana; therefore have I elucidated it. Accordingly Mālunkyāputta, bear always in mind what it is that I have not elucidated and what it is that I have elucidated.'

Thus spake The Blessed One; and, delighted, the venerable Mālunkyāputta applauded the speech of The Blessed One.

Source: Quoted from the *Majjhima-Nikāya*, Sutta 63, Henry Clarke Warren, trans. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1896).

(*Continued from page* 312)

quently in its view the mind is inseparable from the body; there is no clear-cut distinction between the two. The same hereditary units, the genes, that bring forth the body also bring forth the mind. Both arise from the same physical particles transmitted by the parents. But the difference in the nature of the mind and the body is so marked that both cannot have the same kind of material components.

(*To be continued*)

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION AMONG THE TRIBALS

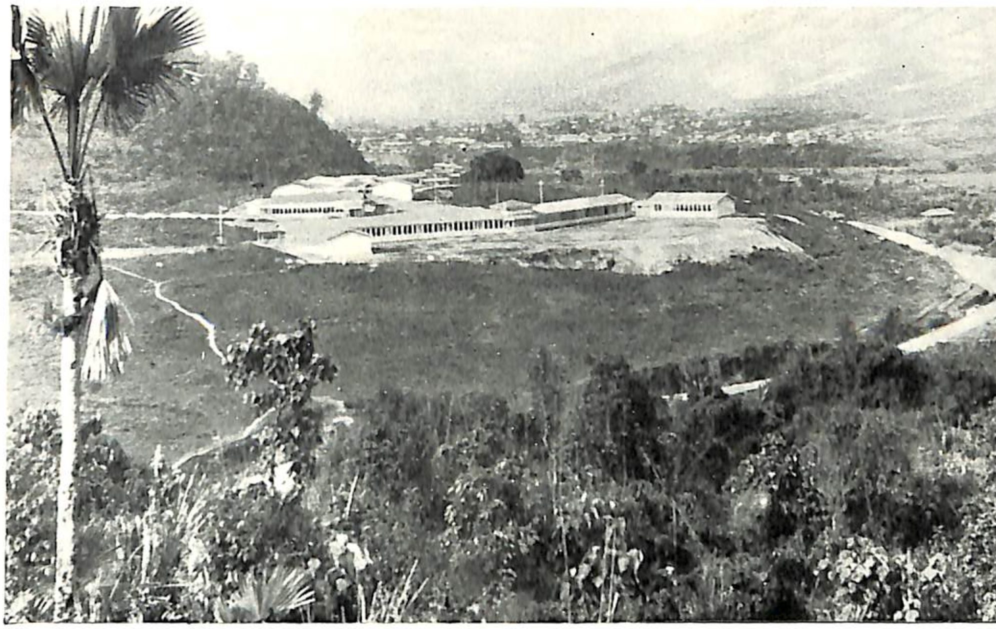
OBSERVER

Our late respected Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru once remarked that the Ramakrishna Mission works silently without advertisement and fanfaronade. Panditji appreciated this quiet efficiency; and the Mission, administered by unassuming monks, also would like to avoid public glare. But in these days of publicity, people want to know what a particular organization does with the money it gets. If publicity is neglected, it may often enough lead to the unwarranted conclusion that the organization is doing nothing, and to that extent its public support may dwindle. So to be effective in the field of charitable and philanthropic service in modern days, an organization must willy-nilly give a public account of its activity.

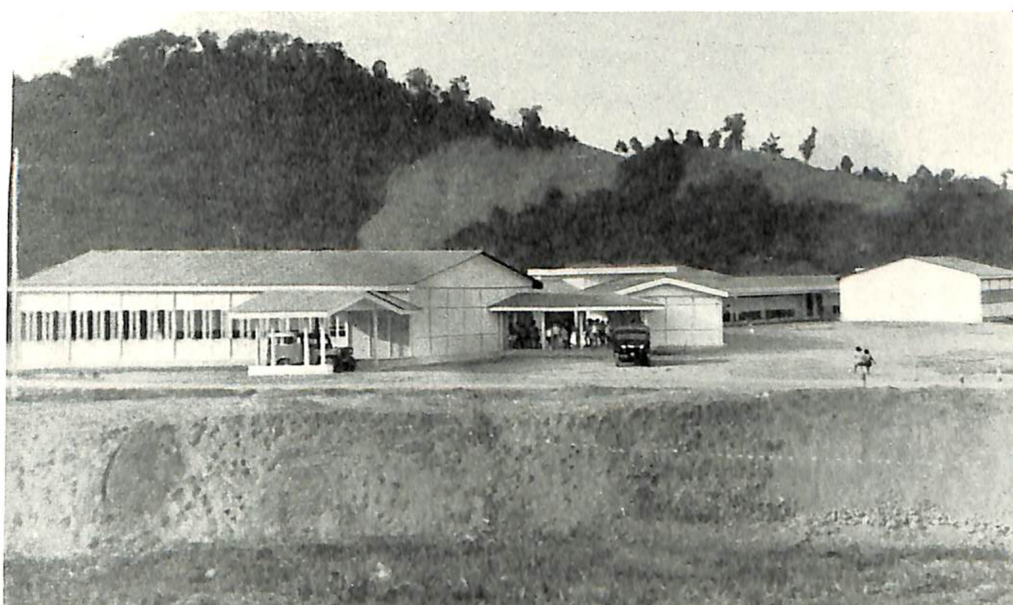
A concrete example will bring home to many the truth of these remarks. The uninformed belief in some quarters is that the Ramakrishna Math and Mission work only in urban areas and there too among the middle classes alone. This is altogether a wrong impression. But we do not propose to deal here with this criticism as a whole; we shall rather confine our attention to a particular aspect of it, in so far as it relates to the work of the Math and Mission among and for the tribals.

Just a few months back, in December 1969, the writer had an opportunity to visit Along, the headquarters of the Siang Division of N.E.F.A., almost at the junction of India, Burma, and China. A few miles east of Along flow, down a deep gorge, the emerald waters of the mighty and holy river Brahmaputra, locally known as Siang. The Division derives its name from this river, as other Divisions in N.E.F.A. also derive theirs from other rivers running through them or washing their boundaries—Kameng, Subansiri, Lohit and Tirap. Along lies deep in the bosom of the Eastern Himalayas, about 150 kilometers from Shilapathar, the nearest railway station on the N. F. Rly., with which the tiny township is connected by a good motorable hill road. A hundred kilometers east of Shilapathar is Lilabari (North Lakhimpur), the airport, from where runs a fine road parallel to the north bank of the Brahmaputra right up to the foothills at Likabari. These hills once had close cultural links with the plains, as is evidenced by a broken temple on a hill near Likabari. The scattered stone pieces with beautiful sculpture bear witness to the magnificence of the structure which once enshrined the image of Goddess Durgā, still having intact her body with ten hands, though the head is smashed. She is known locally as Mālinī. That contact was lost for many decades, and, during the British regime, the people of the plains had no access to the hills. The tribals led their isolated life following a set cultural pattern woven round their gods—the sun and moon. Indians and English were equally foreigners in their eyes, and they shunned both. Things have however changed for the better in the sixties of the present century, particularly after the Chinese invasion. Progress is writ large everywhere and Government is spending immensely to accelerate this and win over the tribals to the cause of modern civilization. In the improvement of their relations with the world outside, the Ramakrishna Mission has contributed not a little.

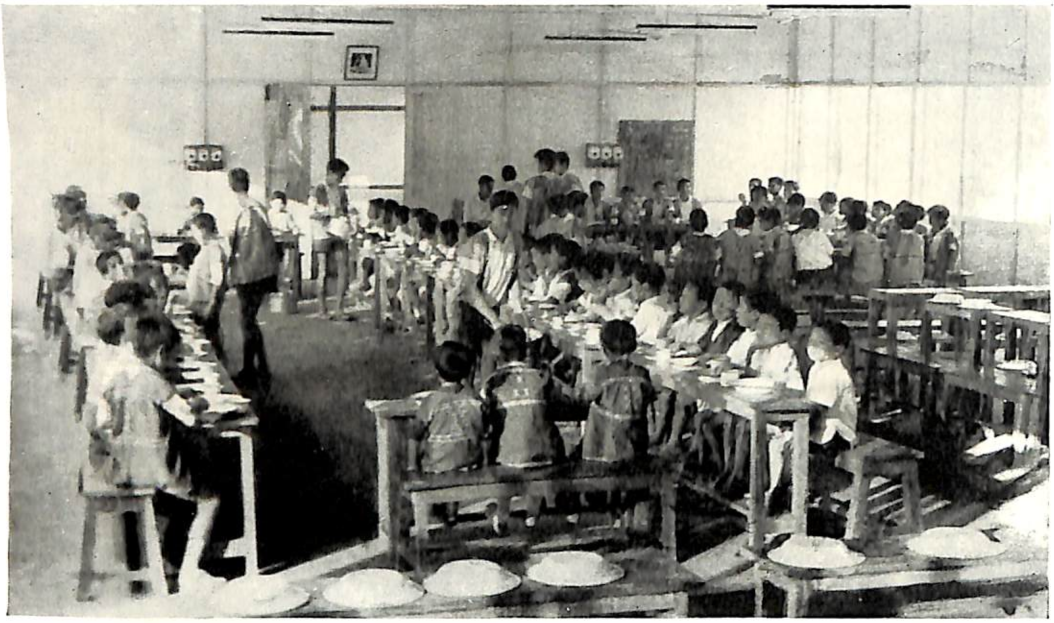
The Ramakrishna Mission started work near Along township in 1966, with a residential primary school for tribal boys and girls, all of whom lived on the school campus in thatched houses built with bamboo and other local materials. The school build-



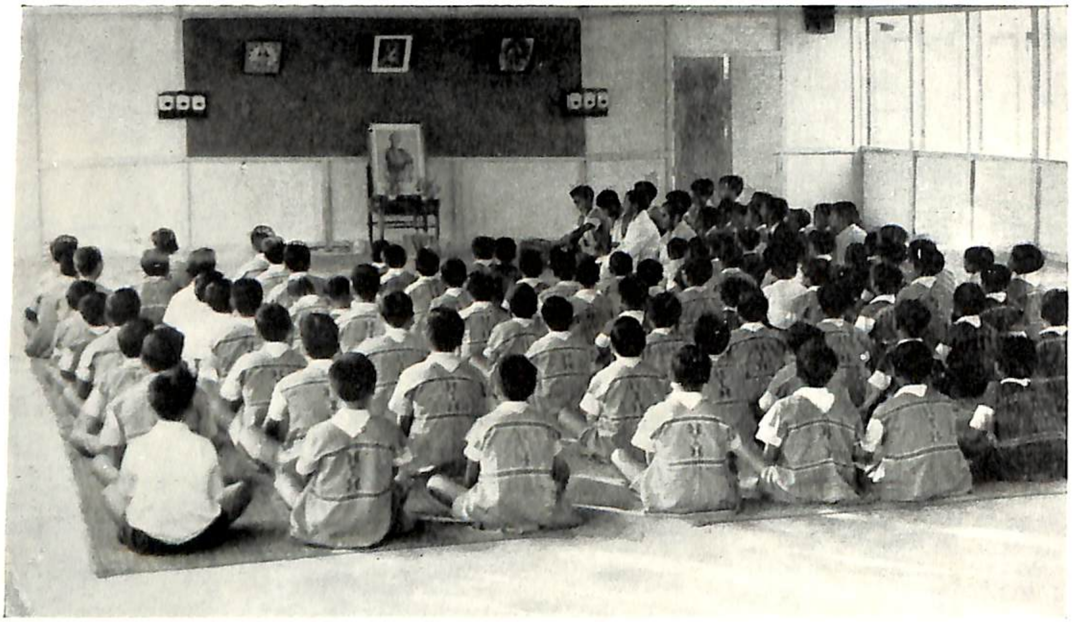
ALONG (NEFA) : A Panoramic View of the School and Hostel



ALONG : The Hostel building, the Assembly Hall, Dormitories and the Study Hall



ALONG : Boys taking tiffin



ALONG : Hostel Boys at Prayer

ing too was of the same pattern. The tribals wanted to learn English, and this was the only school in the area which promised them greater contact with the wide world through an international medium. The tribals were eager for knowledge and self-expression and their children were highly intelligent. They came from far-off villages, for N.E.F.A. is very thinly populated, with only four inhabitants per square mile. The school had therefore to be residential one. This provided an opportunity for the Mission to come in intimate touch with the tribals and identify itself with their aspirations. They, for their part, accepted the Mission heartily, provided as much land as the Mission wanted, built cottages for the school and accommodation for their children as a labour of love, and co-operated in the project in every other way. The monks of the Mission too worked with them shoulder to shoulder and thus won their love. The Government of India helped the Mission unstintingly with money and other services. And thus came a glorious day in the history of Along when on 6th December, 1969, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, Home Minister of India, inaugurated the new school and hostel buildings constructed at a cost of about Rs. 14,00,000.

That day the whole place assumed a gala atmosphere. The tribals had worked day and night to decorate the place with gates, arches, flags, festoons and a rostrum for a meeting—all in the tribal fashion with bamboo and straw. The occasion was thought sufficiently important for the Home Minister to fly all the way from distant Delhi, and with him came Governor B. K. Nehru from Shillong along with many officials of the N.E.F.A. administration. The General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission presided. The Governor, as chief guest, spoke first; then the Home Minister made a fine speech. Some tribal leaders also spoke in Hindi. Last the General Secretary spoke of the ideas and ideals which the Ramakrishna Mission were seeking to work out among the tribals.

Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, according to the General Secretary, had raised the dignity of men by discovering their potential divinity and had called upon their followers to worship that divinity for the sake of their own spiritual uplift. Swami Vivekananda, again, asked all not only to tolerate but also to accept and honour other points of view and other cultures. The Mission therefore approaches the tribals in a spirit of worshipful service, not criticizing them in any way, but rather encouraging them to develop according to their own genius. Their cultural traits are loved and preserved and their God is worshipped with full reverence. The Mission also brings knowledge from outside. Through the Mission they learn of the cultures of the peoples of the plains. They are left free to evaluate them, and to adopt and absorb as much as they will.

The Mission's work has succeeded and the tribals are now very eager to see this work spread in other parts of N.E.F.A. The N.E.F.A. administration is equally enthusiastic and, as a result, the Mission has been almost forced, in spite of its extreme dearth of monastic manpower, to take steps to start another such centre next year in Tirap, the eastern-most Division of N.E.F.A.

From N.E.F.A. we proceed to the Khasi Hills, which even today are supposed to be inhabited by backward tribals, though in fact the Khasis are now very advanced culturally and intellectually, and can easily claim equality in these fields with the other regions of India. Still it may be ethnologically correct to call this a tribal area for many reasons.

The Ramakrishna Mission started work in these hills about half a century ago and fought its way against foreign antagonism and missionary rivalry. Its work is now well established in almost the whole of the

Southern Khasi Hills. It is directed from a fast-developing village centre at Cherrapunji,[1] noted all along for its heavy rainfall, and now also for a cement factory and various forms of activities organized by the Christian Missions. At Cherrapunji the Ramakrishna Mission has now a High School with a hostel for boys. Under this Cherrapunji centre are 21 Middle English Schools and 27 Primary Schools. All these educational institutions have a total student population of about 2,200.

Of these the institutions at Shellapunji and Shobharpunji deserve special mention. Shella and Shobhar have seen better days. They nestle on the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills, overlooking the vast plains of Sylhet below, now in Pakistan. These villages sold their oranges, areca-nuts, bias stone and other hill products to the people below who carried these to the markets further west. But after Pakistan was born, these sources of income dried up. Now the hillmen are trying to improve their lot through education and by adopting other means of livelihood.

Shellapunji, almost at the foot of the hills, with a fast-flowing charming river below, had a bias towards Hinduism all along. The Shella Durbar, which ruled over the village, owed cultural allegiance to its neighbours of Sylhet. Shobharpunji too, though a little higher up, was closely linked with the plains. Mahadev, its neighbouring village, still has a temple of Śiva who receives daily worship. When this link was rent asunder, the Ramakrishna Mission still stood firmly by the people of these areas and filled up the void by holding the annual Durgā Pūjā at Shella, and other festivals there as well as in other villages. Shella has a permanent shrine dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna, who is worshipped regularly by the villagers. A similar shrine is maintained at Shobhar as well. Besides, each place has a lower secondary school with lower classes attached to it. Shobhar has also a crafts section.

In addition to all this educational activity, the main centre at Cherra teaches bee-keeping to the nearby villagers and arranges for the marketing of honey. Its 9 apiary centres produces 28,000 kg. of honey with 7,000 hives.

The nearby Mission centre at Shillong has a mobile dispensary which covers 30 villages and serves about 16,000 patients annually. We need not mention the free clinic at Shillong which caters for about 45,000 patients, who are really tribals, but too sophisticated now to be called so. Its students' home accommodates 25 free tribal boys, Khasis and others.

The Mission has also helped the Khasis in the development of their language by publishing books, composing songs and popularizing the Indian tunes.

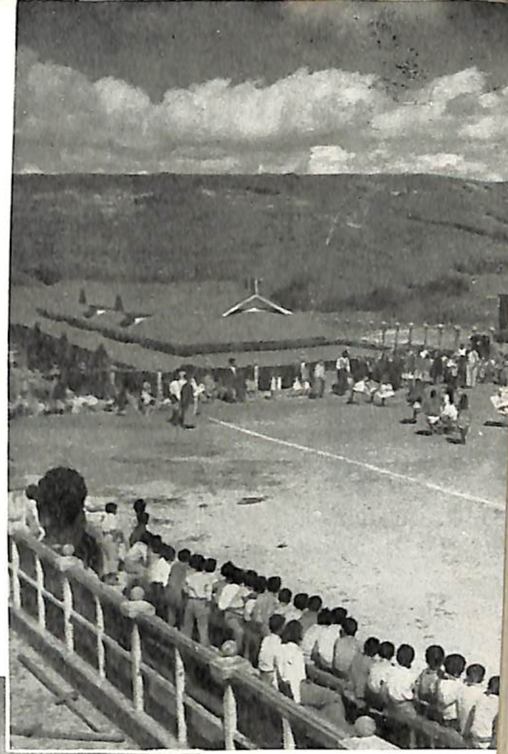
From the Khasi Hills we move on to Ranchi, where, in the Mission Ashrama at the foot of the Morabadi Hills, an institution called Divyayan has been built up. It is a residential institution where Adivasi small farmers are taught scientific agriculture, poultry management, bee-keeping, animal husbandry, and how to organize social welfare activities in their own villages. Teaching, food, accommodation, uniform and other requisites are provided free. The trainees participate in Adivasi and other religious festivals held at the Ashrama.

Several modern small farms owned and operated by ex-trainees of Divyayan have been developed. Special mention may be made of a farm at Bhita, by the side of the river Patpato. Until last November the land lay waste. Then one of the ex-trainees, with two friends, applied what he had learnt at Divyayan, and now there is there a 15-acre farm, sprinkler-irrigated. It is expected that more of such farms will be developed

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[1] *Punji* means a village.

KHASI HILLS



Right : Sports at Ramakrishna Mission High School, Cherrapunji

Below : A Primary School in Khasi Hills





Some of our Primary School Children in Khasi Hills



Students out on a Picnic



School at Shobharpunji



Divyayan : Hostel, Class Room and Office

Right : Training-operation of Power Tiller

Below : Land once waste is lusty green : Bhita Farm now owned and operated by Divyayan Trainees

Inset : Training in Tractor Ploughing under the auspices of Divyayan.







Ramakrishna Mission's Welfare Work in a Naga Village
thirty-six miles from Mizo border



Naga people welcoming the President, Ramakrishna Math & Mission
in their traditional way

there. From land that produced nothing, three or four crops are being taken.

About 10 trainees of the first batch are also doing a good job at Chama Nagri, 8 miles from the Ashrama. Land that used to produce less than 100 maunds of paddy, last season yielded more than 500 maunds. Elsewhere, one of the ex-trainees now has his own poultry with hy-line birds. Others are expected to follow suit.

The Ashrama conducts about 24 milk-distribution centres in distant villages, most of which are run by ex-trainees of Divyayan. About 2500 children get prepared milk daily. The mobile dispensary, and the dispenscary at the Ashrama, serve many Adivasi patients. Vitamin and nutrition capsules are also given to a large number of people.

The Adivasi volunteers in some milk-distribution centres have arranged games and sports. Last winter the sports competitions held at the Ashrama for the children of these centres were an innovation in which a large number of Adivasis participated. Adivasi youngsters are very interested in organizing social and educational work in their villages, and in this they make full use of what they have learnt at Divyayan. As a result several night schools have been organized in different villages by ex-trainees, who manage them themselves.

Then there are the Students' Homes or hostels at Puri, Silchar, Shillong, Kalady, Narendrapur and Purulia which accommodate nearly 160 tribal boys. They mix freely and lovingly with boys from various parts of India. They study their ways of life, adopt what they choose and make life-long friendships. The plains' boys also learn to appreciate the good qualities of the tribal boys and develop love for them. National integration is achieved in these institutions without any conscious effort.

The Ramakrishna Mission readily admits that, judged according to international standards, and compared with the vast Indian field waiting for intensive service, the work done by it up till now is not very impressive—at least not so far as quantitative outturn is concerned. But considered from the point of view of the very limited number of monastic workers that the Mission has, the poverty of the country as a whole and the qualitative ideal, rather from that of the magnitude of the work that the Mission aims at, the result is not insignificant.

What matters most is that the Mission has earned for the country the love and confidence of the tribal people. The tribals now feel that their interests are safe in the hands of Indians, and that by identifying themselves with India they need not be afraid of losing their religion and culture. At the same time they feel assured that among Indians, their own countrymen, they will meet with greater respect, and will have greater scope for a high standard of life and for self-expression.

THE MESSAGE OF AWAKENED INDIA

SWAMI TEJASANANDA

Awakened India, viz. *Prabuddha Bharata,* the premier monthly English organ of the Ramakrishna Order, has just completed the seventy-fifth year of its useful existence. On this memorable occasion of its seventy-fifth anniversary, it is worthwhile to recapitulate the message it has got to deliver to humanity, and also to assess its valued contributions towards the fulfilment of the lofty ideal as outlined in brief by Swami Vivekananda in his celebrated poem entitled 'To the Awakened India'[1] at the time of its inauguration. In that poem we find a brilliant enunciation and exposition of the principles and the sublime message for which the *Prabuddha Bharata* (*Awakened India*) stands. In addition to what has been stated above, it has also been dealing with various other problems that have been cropping up from time to time in the different spheres of human thought and activity. It has left no stone unturned for the dissemination of the accumulated spiritual wisdom of our race, and also for the evolution of a cultural synthesis as conceived by Swami Vivekananda for the betterment of humanity at large.

Needless to point out that, to actualize this noble mission on all fronts, what is needed is not merely a bundle of empty moral or political platitudes, or skill in diplomacy, but a real change of heart, and the development of a higher vision of life that can soar far above the level of the sordid concerns of our earthly existence and envisage the spiritual values of all our creative endeavours. For, the ultimate end of a civilization is not merely to increase material comforts and to satisfy the physical needs of mankind but to organize life in such a way that it may be the more and more perfect vehicle of Spirit.

But what a grim and lurid picture do we find silhouetted in this nuclear age against the placid and broad background of the noble mission of the great builders of an ideal civilization ! Destructive forces have been let loose on the surface of the earth through scientific studies and experiments, and the proudest achievements of the shining geniuses of the world in the fields of Arts and Architecture, Science and Literature, Philosophy and Religion are being decimated beyond recognition by the ruthless fury of the warring nations from time to time ; for when the trumpet of war blows and passions run high, all pretences of civilization and culture are flung to the four winds and, as a result, man is helplessly driven to the perpetration of crimes which he would shudder to think of in peaceful times.

It is admitted on all hands that the cultivation of Science is intended to beautify human life and society, to enrich the store of human wisdom and thereby to confer benefits of far-reaching effects on the people at large. But it is extremely regrettable that, in recent years, it has been undertaken for purposes other than humane or holy ! Needless to add that Science fails in its noble work of promoting peace and brotherhood when it caters only for the animal instincts of man and becomes a dreadful instrument of destruction in the hands of wily politicians.

As a matter of fact, when greed for pelf and power becomes the ruling passion of the leaders of society, the creative forces of humanity are harnessed to the wheel of destruction, and the fair face of the earth is besmirched with the innocent blood of

[1] Printed at the beginning of this special number.

millions. The masses, the backbone of a nation, become the sacrifice. Above their heads are exchanged challenges for causes of which they know nothing and for stakes which are of no interest to them. Across their backs bleeding and bowed, takes place the struggle of ideas, while they themselves have no share in them. Such indeed are the ghastly tragedies that are being enacted in the name of politics and national efficiency in both the theatres of the East and the West.

Sir Oliver Lodge, one of the distinguished thinkers and scientists of the world, has pertinently stated in his celebrated work *Modern Problems* that scientific discovery can be made at once interesting, can be assimilated and its fruits reaped by all. Any discovery made by a group or by an individual becomes thereafter the property of humanity and the world is advanced a step further; but the gratuitous bringing about of catastrophes by their means is diabolic. That is what war does. It brings about, on purpose, disasters which in peace we regard with special abhorrence. In fact, when the supreme ideal of religion and philosophy is perverted and dragged down from its empyrean height of absolutism to the lowest level of sordid utilitarianism to satisfy the immediate ends of men, the destructive forces are automatically released from the cauldron of human nature to play havoc in the society of mankind.

It is obvious that, in the present state of scientific progress and development, a nation cannot stand by itself as an exclusively separate unit without any inter-relation with the rest of the world. The fates of all the peoples have been so inextricably blended that any loss of balance in one part of the world is sure to produce a repercussion on the other. Willy-nilly all are sucked into the maelstrom and are constrained to take part in actions which most of them would shun in positive disgust.

No doubt various legislations, international agreements, institutions, courts of arbitration, conventions etc. have been formed to combat this evil. But in practice all these have served as so many temporary obstacles and barriers set up in the way of the destructive torrent only to allow it time to gather in strength and volume, to sweep away everything before its mighty onrush.

H. G. Wells, a renowned historian of the West, has suggested in his book *Open Conspiracy*, that to avoid the positive ends of war and to attain the new levels of prosperity and power that now come into view, an effective world control, not merely of armed force but of finance and the main movement of staple commodities, of the drift and expansion of population as also of the supply of war materials, is required. For he believes that if the great powers join hands in a spirit of fellowship in the interest of peace and establish effective control over the aforesaid items, warring people would be bound to bend their knees before their concerted action. Wells has further suggested in his *Apology for a World Utopia* that, if Europe is to be saved from ultimate disaster, it has to stop thinking in terms of the people of France, of the people of England or of the people of Germany. The first task before Europe is to release its children from the nationalist obsession—to teach the masses of Europe a little truthful history in which each one will see his country in the proper proportions, and a little truthful ethnology in which each country will get over the delusion that its people is a distinct and individual race. It is the international mind that the world needs.

Needless to say, these high-souled suggestions, if followed to their logical conclusion, may prove a deterrent to the unbridled display of wild passions in the collective life

of nations. But we doubt whether any outward pressure to prevent war without a corresponding mental change will be productive of any enduring results. To say the least, every nation being obsessed with its own peculiar problems and self-interest, it is hardly to be expected that there will be a consensus of opinion in regard to working unitedly for the common good of the world.

When viewed through the telescope of history, it becomes distinctly clear that the Western world, saddled as it is with its own problems and ideologies, is not in a position to save its civilization from an impending shipwreck unless a nobler philosophy of life come to its rescue. The part once played by Alexander and Caesar, Attila and Charlemagne, Tamerlane and Napoleon, Hitler and Mussolini loomed large in days gone by. But when the permanent values of their spectacular military exploits are judged in the light of those unifying creative forces that contribute to the growth of men in moral and spiritual stature, as also to the enrichment of human thought and culture, they sink into insignificance and only prove the worthlessness and ephemerality of their meteoric success.

Day by day the world is growing sick of such bloody activities of the militant powers for the exploitation of the weak and for the limitless increase of armaments for colonial expansion and self-aggrandizement to the detriment of the collective good and security of the world. In view of the kaleidoscopic changes that are fast occurring before our very eyes in the realm of politics, one can hardly be too optimistic about the future of such a militant culture which seeks to satisfy only the physical demands of humanity to the negation of the spiritual.

It is a matter of great pride and satisfaction to see that India, in spite of manifold vicissitudes in the sphere of her political life, has never given the go-by to the paramount theme of her life—the cult of the Spirit. Behind India lies the long Indian summer of the soul, thousands of years of the contemplative life, and it is this which has qualified her in the higher realm of spirituality. When this is generally acknowledged, then the East and the West may once again join hands and bring into being a synthetic culture out of this union, to ensure universal peace and harmony in this world of clash and conflict of ideas and ideals.

Already a new awakening is discernible on the horizon of human life. Amidst the din and bustle of the warfare of the bellicose nations are being laid the foundations of spiritual peace, and it is encouraging to find that the outstanding literary, philosophical and scientific geniuses of all races and climes have not only caught the all-comprehensive Vedantic conception of life but have also begun to uphold it as the panacea for all the corroding ills the modern world is subject to. It is also a matter of great satisfaction to note in this connection that the General Conference of UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), one of the world's most powerful bodies dedicated to the establishment of universal peace and welfare through international cultural cooperation, reiterated its lofty ideal to the following effect at its fourteenth session held in Paris on the 4th of November, 1966:

> 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed and that peace must be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.'

In Article IV of its constitution it further says that its objective is also 'to develop peaceful relations and friendship among the peoples and bring about a better understanding of each other's way of life' and 'to raise the level of the spiritual and material life of

man in all parts of the world.' Article X of the said constitution, moreover, emphasizes that.

> 'Cultural co-operation shall be specially concerned with the moral and intellectual education of young people in a spirit of friendship, intellectual understanding and peace, and shall foster awareness among States of the need to stimulate talent and promote training of the rising generation in the most varied sectors.'

The time does not therefore seem to be far distant when a richer and a nobler type of civilization will be evolved through the intermingling of the two streams of thought and culture. As a matter of fact, it is only in this sublime idealism of Spirit that humanity will find the fulfiilment of its noblest aspirations and the realization of the democratic dreams of a world federation and universal peace. And we are glad to point out that this very ideal is being stoutly advocated and successfully preached through the columns of *Prabuddha Bharata* and other similar organs on behalf of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Today when the East and the West have been brought into closer and more intimate contact with each other, and the savants of both hemispheres are shaking hands in love and admiration for their mutual achievements, they should not ignore the lofty mission which science is to fulfil in the interest of peace and harmony in the world. It is a mistake to suppose that science and philosophy are two watertight compartments and as such cannot influence each other in any way. As a matter of fact, the latest findings of science in both the East and the West have made it abundantly clear that the lines of demarcation between realism and idealism are more arbitrary than natural, and that scientific knowledge is strengthening and not undermining the foundations of philosophy. The two meet at a point where humanity stands as one indivisible entity, and it is this basic unity which both science and philosophy seek to find. It is, therefore, fervently hoped that, in this age of scientific renaissance, both the East and the West should bring about a complete reorientation in their respective outlooks, so that the Science of the West coupled with the Vedanta of the East may usher in an ideal civilization for the well-being of mankind.

It cannot be denied that there is something hidden in the inmost depth of the heart which wants to break through all physical barriers and human limitations to intuit the Supreme Reality. In fact, the attainment of the highest spiritual wisdom through this realization of the Supreme Truth constitutes the true measure of greatness in the life of an individual or of a race, and unless and until this light of wisdom is kindled in the human mind and transfigures his entire personality, it would be vain to expect a healthy revolution in the existing relation between man and man, between nation and nation. Needless to point out that the warring instincts of mankind cannot be set at rest unless Spiritual ideas seep into men's minds and hearts. And this the warring nations must learn from the immortal teachings of the Vedanta—the sacred treasure-house of the accumulated wisdom of the ancient saints and sages of India.

The soil of India has been trodden by the greatest sages that ever lived and it is India from where spirituality and philosophy have again and again travelled to the outside world and influenced its thought and culture in a large measure, and it is this land of great spiritual giants from where once more the message of peace and harmony must travel to the distant corners of the world to establish peace and happiness in the society of mankind. The advent of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda into the arena of Indian life in the modern age was a turning-point in the annals of human culture. Swami

Vivekananda, the great torch-bearer of Love and Truth, universal brotherhood and harmony, and an apostle of the selfless service which his great Master Sri Ramakrishna taught and represented in his life, said:

> 'As far back as the days of the Upaniṣads, we have thrown the challenge to the world: "Not by progeny, not by wealth, but by renunciation alone immortality is reached". Race after race has taken up the challenge and tried their utmost to solve the world-riddle on the plane of desires. They have failed in the past—the old ones have become extinct under the weight of wickedness and misery which lust for power and gold brings in its train, and the new ones are tottering to their fall. The question has yet to be decided whether peace will survive or war; whether patience will survive or non-forbearance; whether muscle will survive or brain; whether worldliness will survive or spirituality. We have solved our problems ages ago.... Our solution is unworldliness—renunciation.'[2]

Swami Vivekananda, while exhorting the people of India in the course of his inspiring lecture at Madras on 'The Work Before us' said:

> 'Up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality! Ay, as has been declared on this soil first, love must conquer hatred, hatred cannot conquer itself. Materialism and all its miseries can never be conquered by materialism. Armies when they attempt to conquer armies only multiply and make brutes of humanity. Spirituality must conquer the West. Slowly they are finding out that what they want is spirituality to preserve them as nations. They are waiting for it, they are eager for it. Where is the supply to come from? Where are the men ready to go out to every country in the world with the messages of the great sages of India? Where are the men who are ready to sacrifice everything, so that this message shall reach every corner of the world? Such heroic souls are wanted to help the spread of Truth. Such heroic workers are wanted to go abroad and help to disseminate the great truths of the Vedanta. The world wants it; without it the world will be destroyed... They have drunk deep of the cup of pleasure and found its vanity. Now is the time to work so that India's Spiritual ideas may penetrate deep into the West.... We must go out, we must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. There is no other alternative, we must do it or die. The only condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought.'[3]

Swamiji has further pointed out.

> 'Wisdom and philosophy do not want to be carried on floods of blood. Wisdom and philosophy do not march upon bleeding human bodies, do not march with violence but come on the wings of peace and love, and that has always been so.... Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard, and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world. Silent, unperceived, yet omnipotent in its effect, it has revolutionized the thought of the world and yet nobody knows when it did so.'[4]

As a matter of fact, in all our vain search for peace and universal brotherhood, we are all the while by-passing the real peacemakers—the prophets of mankind who have proclaimed from age to age the eternal principles that will furnish the *terra firma* on which to build the edifice of lasting peace and brotherhood. Politicians and economists bereft of the deep insight and balanced wisdom of the spiritually enlightened Columbuses of the world, can at most seize on the surface values of life and things, and attempt patchwork. But that cannot serve as an antidote for the ailments

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[2] *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, Vol. IV (1955), pp. 314-15.

[3] Ibid Vol. III (1955), p. 277.

[4] Ibid, pp. 273-74.

of humanity. The world has had enough of such so-called champions of peace who cannot see more than what meets the eye and have as such created more wars and more harm than good to human society in the name of peace and happiness.

The world is ever proud of the rich heritage of spiritual culture bequeathed to posterity by the real prophets of peace. The lives of Lord Buddha—the Light of Asia—and of Jesus of Nazareth, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya and Śrī Caitanya, Guru Nanak and Sri Ramakrishna, and other great messengers of Truth and Peace, tell the very same tale. They discovered new values and viewed the march of mankind from a higher platform of life. Everything had for them a meaning and a purpose which is foreign to the earth-bound eye of a rank materialist. Immured in the prison-house of his own passions and prejudices, such a materialist peace-maker can hardly get above personal predilections and sordid interests. The time is ripe when one must come out into the open to see the calm and radiant countenances of those God-men, the real peacemakers and votaries of Truth, who felt peace, lived in peace, diffused peace around, and sacrificed their all for the sake of Peace and Truth sublime. There is no room for hatred in the march of their ideas. Let us look up to their noble gospels, their lives of inestimable value and listen to their soul-enthralling voice that is calling ever and anon all fighters to close their ranks and to save humanity and civilization from total annihilation.

The *Prabuddha Bharata,* which stands for this lofty idealism and message of our spiritual forbears, has left no stone unturned, in the course of its long and arduous journey, to prepare the way for the united pilgrimage of mankind towards the supreme goal of self-understanding, universal love and brotherhood, and also for rendering loving service to all, irrespective of caste, creed or nationality, in a spirit of worship of the Divine.

(*Continued from page* 315)

So, when they come to know that there is such an opportunity, they respond, especially those who understand what man's spiritual life is. And when there is a talk on spiritual matters there is a great response. They even appreciate the beauty and art in Hindu ritual. It greatly attracts them. The Government of the United States even has a training programme for teachers in Indian State, where Indian culture, Hindu rituals and so forth, are taught. Swami Bhashyananda and I went there to demonstrate some Hindu rituals to a group of teachers. They were so happy, everybody wanting to know and understand the various intricacies of Hindu ritual. This interest is not merely the desire to do something exotic ; there is a desire to participate in the spiritual aspect of these rituals.

(*To be continued*)

DESACRALIZATION

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

Our forbears would declare us irreligious and that with reason: for them religion meant theism, belief in a personal God, in a God who chose a people or a country; for them the sacred is the other pole of the secular (the latin root of sacred, *sacer,* means 'the other'). Sacred considered as the other has a restrictive role and not an englobing or expansive one. The sacred belongs to the protected domain of interdictions and to make it encompass the secular or the profane would mean death to the sacred. For the previous generations symbols and institutions are sacrosanct and to change them would signify loss of faith and irreligion.

But if religion is understood in a larger sense, as the orientation of the human mind towards the Supreme, the unconditioned and the Absolute, as the fact of being seized by an ultimate purpose, then our epoch is as religious as the preceding ones. The men of today are not less engrossed in the quest of truth, of social justice, of truth in the domain of depth psychology, of art, and science. Nor are they less in stature in the matter of devotion to a superior truth.

> 'It is true that our epoch searches God in its own way. Perhaps it is necessary to forget all that we have learnt in the traditional way on the subject of God, even his name. But if God means profundity, depth of everything, then that definition fits in with the modern attitude. It is imposible for anybody to say that life has no depth, that it is shallow and still live it. Anyone who knows something of depth, knows something of God.' (Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations.*)

God, depth of everything, is at the same time a psychological and metaphysical truth. Why is it that man has need to go to the end of all research? Is it not the depth of experience that draws him? At the end of an emotion, it is the being of that emotion that reveals itself. At the end of that emotion, it is 'I' myself that I meet with. It is depth that draws us from the beginning and gives intensity to our search. The depth of our work in the workshop is the same thing as the depth of meditation in a chapel. Here we touch the unity between the different domains of our activity which permits us to say that God is not simply depth but unity. Vivekananda says that the highest religion is unity. 'The workshop, the study, the farmyard, the field are equally good for the meeting of God and man, as the cell of a monk or the temple.' When God is conceived as unity, not the God who distributes Himself in beings and objects, but He who is the unifying Centre of everything, the essential *all* in everything, it is He that sustains all beings without dwelling in them.[1]

If God is all in everything, if God is the profundity of all works of man, why is it that man of today has developed a religion which separates the day of God (Sunday, Sabbath) from the day of work, from work in the workshop and meditation? The answer is simple: Man has projected his own inner division into the religious field, his own alienation, separating the body of a tree from the roots. He who lives the state of alienation feels the need of separating the sacred from the secular in order to get the impulsion to avoid the profane and

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[1] 'By My form unmanifested all this world is pervaded. All beings dwell in me; and I do not dwell in them. Nor do those beings dwell in Me; behold My divine *yoga*! Sustaining all beings, but not dwelling in them is My Self the Cause of beings.' (*Gītā,* IX. 4 & 5).

to court the sacred. In this he is free to move, but is movement freedom? In the process of moving away from the impure to the pure we are not free. There is movement or freedom of movement, but not freedom. On the contrary, to realize that *we* are the sacred, that the sacred in an effort to become *more,* to become universal, has become secular, we provoke a movement in which we are free. Here we do not turn a blind eye to the profane; rather we find a reason for its existence and then annex it to the sacred in an englobing act of comprehension. The sacred which wants to universalize itself 'desacralizes itself.'

How can God demonstrate that He is all in everything, if He does not break down the barriers that man has constructed round the sacred to protect it? He should liberate the unholy from its own character before annexing it. So then it is the walls round the profane that are falling down. Behind the irreligion of our epoch, behind the appearance of irreligion, there is a movement on the part of the sacred for liberating the unholy, so that it becomes more total.

It is man who constructed the limits round the holy and when he finds that the holy overflows its limits in an effort to annex the unholy, for him holiness is destroyed. The sacred for its part does not limit itself. Take for example the case of a God who has been claimed by a certain people as theirs. If that God declares 'I am not only your God. I am God of all—I am universal—therein lies my character of being God,' the people who had the impression of being the 'chosen people' will declare that God is desacralizing Himself, that He is losing His real nature.

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It is true that today all symbols are being broken, sacred and otherwise; all traditional institutions are either impeached or torpedoed. A symbol dies when it no more plays its role. But when a symbol dies there is something behind it which does not die with it. It is the intemporal in the symbol, the trans-symbolic which survives the death of the symbol. When it is said that 'God is dead', what is being declared is the death of God who is born and who is temporal. It is the temporal in the symbol that dies, not the Intemporal, the Being. In suppressing what is temporal in a symbol, one liberates the Intemporal, or better still, one co-operates with the Intemporal trying to liberate itself. It is the Supreme (Intemporal) that is renewing Himself, that is changing His face according to the need of the times to put on another face. Man co-operates with Him who is in the process of 'desacralizing' Himself, 'universalizing' Himself. So then the courage to demolish the symbols comes from Being who is changing His appearance.

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All religions speak of sacred space and sacred time. God was born in a certain country and the space of that country chosen by God becomes sacred. God chose a certain moment in history to come and the time from that moment becomes sacred. But another country also can claim the coming of God and then the sacredness of time and space formulated by the first comes into conflict with that of the second. By these one sees the restrictive character of the sacred as understood till today and from that issues forth the imperative need of a universal sacred which may have its origin in the theological cadre, but must flow out into the vast space of universality.

The symbols that man created since his first fall, to use the language of Christian symbolism, are all either weary or dead. Man today wants to leave them aside. He wants to forget his past, leave aside even his pre-Adamic memory in order to make

his creativity sharper and richer. Continuing the same symbolism, we can say that man is in his second fall and yearns to take everything in a new light since it is a new beginning. In this adventure, man is alone, in a heroic solitude, just as Being before creation, Being who accepted to be in splendid isolation before creation.

If man today has no faith in sentiments or thoughts which have finality, it is because he fears that finality is the death of all creativity. If religion is a possibility, a climate in which he can integrate with the unconditioned, then he will opt for such a religion. This means taking a risk, risk understood in the sense of accepting the unknown and the unconditioned. When one does not turn back for support, but stands in the present and projects the time into the future in which he can be creative to the full, it is taking a risk.

That is man after the second fall. He does not want to be God, for he wants to be man choosing as his companions in this journey the spirit of Independence and the faculty of wonder.

SOCIAL TENSION: WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

It is difficult to imagine a society in which tension is completely absent, for no matter how well-organized, progressive and affluent a given society may be, it is too much to expect that everybody in it will feel that he has had from society all that is his due and that there is no reason why he should not be happy and contented. It may be that his cause for complaint is more imaginary than real, but so long as he has the feeling that he is being neglected and he is not getting what he rightly deserves, there is cause for potential trouble for himself and for others around him. But when this feeling is shared by many and when those who have this feeling come together under a common nomenclature based on religion, caste or language, it is a problem which may have far-reaching consequences unless tackled at an early stage, and the leaders of the society to which such people belong will have to take due note of the situation and then do all they can to help remove this feeling. First and foremost, they ought to probe the causes which have led the people concerned to feel that they are being neglected, identify those causes, and then try as best they can to eliminate them. In fact, a progressive society should feel it to be its concern to ensure that every section of it has what is its due in the way of rights and privileges, has ample opportunities to fulfil its legitimate hopes and aspirations, and if it is backward, has also enough encouragement to catch up with the more progressive sections of that society. It is not enough to guarantee equal rights and privileges for everybody: care should be taken to see that in practice too everybody enjoys the rights and privileges which are so guaranteed.

This is not as easy as it may sound, for India's experience over the past two decades has shown that in spite of the fact that she has a fine Constitution which leaves nothing to be desired so far as the question of individual rights and privileges is concerned, she has not been able to satisfy the hopes and aspirations of many of her minorities or even of many sections of her majority com-

munity. A study of the Article in the Indian Constitution which deals with fundamental rights clearly shows that it was the hope of the Indian leaders that they would be able to evolve slowly a society in which the different sections composing it would retain their separate identities, but would together form a happy, prosperous and close-knit society. This hope of the leaders has not been fulfiled. It is not that there is anything wrong with the Constitution as such ; in fact, the Constitution as it is now is one of the finest that any country has in that it is a fine blending of idealism with realism and leaves ample elbow-room for adjustments as and when circumstances so demand ; yet, surprisingly enough, there is much discontent among the people, and clashes among them over issues of language, religion, race, territorial boundaries, social and political interests, etc., are now a common occurrence. There is in fact much tension *now prevailing* throughout the country, and the peace, solidarity and understanding which the makers of the Constitution hoped for, remain as remote a dream as ever.

This is no reason to feel depressed, for the interesting phenomenon is that this kind of situation is to be found everywhere in the world today, including even those countries which are known to be most advanced. If any single factor may be described today as a hallmark of the present age, it is this social tension, a malaise that now afflicts both progressive and backward societies alike. In a sense, this may be hailed as a happy augury, for it is a proof of the fact that there is in society now such an exuberance of the spirit of enterprise that it refuses to accept the *status quo* as final, but wishes to recreate society according to its new hopes, feelings and urges. There is tension because it finds that there are too many inhibiting factors around, factors which prevent it from doing what it wishes to do to suit its present dominant moods ; because it is not able to make experiment with new norms as it wishes to ; because it feels there are too many constraints imposed upon it, making it impossible for it to seek new avenues of self-expression. There may be much irrationality about this discontent, and it may be, too, that the new urges, when satisfied, will do more harm than good to society ; but it would be suicidal if an attempt were made to dismiss it as an irresponsible demand fit only to be ignored. The malaise is now so widespread and deep-rooted that the situation can be described only as explosive and there can be no question of ignoring it. It has to be closely studied and wherever possible, due concessions made so that the immediate causes responsible for this tension may be eliminated. It is clear that society everywhere is passing through a stage of transition, often because sections of people who have long had their rights suppressed are now asserting themselves in the new consciousness of their power. A society has no right to exist unless it is able to readjust itself to the new conditions which are thus thrown up from time to time as a sequel to this feeling among some categories of people that they are not getting what is rightly theirs. As stated already, this feeling may have no basis in fact, but that does not mean that the tension that the feeling generates is less real or the mischief that may flow from it is less deadly. As a matter of fact, any problem which is subjective tends to be more complicated and, to that extent, also less susceptible to diagnosis and treatment When any section of people in a society have a feeling, may be altogether without any justification, that they are being wronged, it is bound to create a situation in which the entire social fabric stands exposed to the danger of disruption. Unfortunately most societies in the world today find themselves in such a situation.

In India today there are many factors which have contributed to the phenomenon of social tension having mounted to a pitch which threatens to blow up the entire social structure. There is no doubt that the crisis is so real and so all-enveloping that one can be complacent only at peril of courting total annihilation. Yet, it may be that if the crisis is handled with courage, vision and after making a proper assessment of the requirements of the situation, it may mark the beginning of a new era which will bring in not only peace and prosperity, but what is more important, real progress in terms of human values. We are indeed passing through an exciting period of history and it is our good fortune that we are closely connected with the process of making that history. It is up to us whether we will make good use of the opportunities which we have before us now, whether we will correctly handle the vast forces which have now been unleashed by the awakening of the people so long neglected and repressed, and by the breath-taking progress we have made in science and technology. Whether or not the process of transition will be peaceful and in the right direction will also depend upon how readily we come forward to fulfil the ambitions of those who have so long missed the opportunities of life, but more important, whether or not we are able to give a correct direction to the endeavours we are going to make henceforth collectively and individually. Take the case of those people who are described in official parlance as 'backward classes'. Numerically they constitute 30% of India's population, and it is obvious that there can be no peace in the country when such a large chunk of our population continue to feel neglected. It is not enough to ensure that they have equal opportunities with the rest of the people, for at that rate they will never be able to catch up with the progressive sections; they in fact ought to get more opportunities and, still more important, they must also feel that society really cares for them and is anxious to see that they develop and progress and eventually come to the same level as others.

It is obvious that all Governmental policies should be geared to this urgent task of helping the weaker sections of society; but it will be a mistake to think that this alone is enough to ease social tension. A look at the American scene will show how, in spite of the best intentions on the part of the Government, a good progressive policy may fail. As everybody knows, the USA Government have now firmly decreed that there shall be no segregation in American schools as between white and coloured students; and they have done everything possible to enforce this; yet they have succeeded only in creating further gulfs between the two groups of students. In India, too, the Government have banned the practice of untouchability, but in reality untouchability is practised despite the ban. This leads to the question whether legislation can help bring social justice to those to whom it is now denied; and this again leads to the more fundamental question whether the State is at all the right sort of agency to ensure social justice, or whether some other agency has to be found for the purpose. The answer seems to be that State intervention is necessary to protect the rights of the weaker sections of a society as against those who are stronger; and it is also necessary to help them to develop so that they may contribute their quota to the total well-being of the society of which they form a part; but this is not enough. This, i.e. State intervention, may in fact fail entirely unless there is a proper climate created in which people will welcome it and will co-operate with the government to help it achieve the purpose which is behind the intervention. Unless there is such a climate, people will resent the measure which the

government may take to safeguard the interests of those who are deemed weak, and the very purpose for which the measure was taken by the government may be defeated. As a matter of fact, all Governmental measures, including even those which are prompted by the best of intentions, tend to be misconstrued by the public as being undue interference on their part; but this becomes the inevitable result only when the ground has not been adequately prepared, so that the people appreciate the purpose behind the legislation or whatever other form the government intervention may take to ensure social justice to those who are weak.

This is not to say that legislation is not necessary, but that it will be wrong to suppose that a social problem can be solved by merely passing a law. At best, it may have some immediate deterrent effects; at worst, it may drive the problem underground for the time being with every possibility of the problem's reappearing at a later date in a more vicious form. There is untouchability in India today because a section of people are considered culturally and otherwise so backward that the rest of the people do not wish to have any physical contact with them, if they can help it. There is a law which prohibits the practice of untouchability, but for all practical purposes, the law has remained infructuous, as the basic factors to which this problem may be traced have remained unchanged. That is, the cultural level of the so-called untouchables, which is mainly responsible for this problem, has not improved to the degree necessary to establish their claim of equality with those who are culturally more advanced. As a result, the anti-untouchability law has only created more complications than it has removed. The root of the problem is that there are not enough opportunities available to the untouchables for their progress and even if those opportunities were available, there is not that keenness on their part which is so desirable, to seize those opportunities and make use of them for their own advancement. This is an example of how a well-intentioned law defeats itself unless it is accompanied by corresponding constructive measures which may be time-consuming but are more effective in the end.

While all that needs to be done may be done in the way of legislative and executive action to ensure social justice, there may yet be widespread discontent not only among those who feel and are in fact neglected, but also among those who are pampered. There are some common factors inherent in industrial civilization which breed discontent—labour-management relationship, to give one single example—; but there are other factors also, more deep-rooted and also connected with industrialization, which contribute no less to this phenomenon of widespread discontent. It is wrong to suppose that there is discontent only because there are disparities, for there never was a time when disparities did not exist, and it is doubtful if a time will ever come when there will be no disparities in society. While it is a welcome sign that people have now become more conscious of their rights and privileges, and are asserting themselves whenever they feel their rights and privileges are being threatened, it will be deceiving oneself if one thinks that this revolt can be checked by merely giving them what is their due. They should certainly get what is rightly theirs, but it will be merely tinkering with the problem if the attempt to solve the problem is left at that. If a close survey is made of the world scene today, it will be a shocking revelation to find that interpersonal relationship among mankind has now touched an all-time low in tolerance, trust and affection. It is nowadays considered silly sentimentalism to allow any human feeling to enter into one's

relations with others, while it is considered high pragmatism to be able to deal with others strictly on a basis of 'self above everything else'. This being the universal attitude today among men and women, which reflects itself in its most brazen form in all their dealings with one another, what wonder is there that there should be social tension ?

In contrast, the picture one gets of a supposedly primitive society is entirely different, it being a society in which human relationship is governed primarily by collective interests and by a set of laws based on respect and consideration for each other. The individual is important but only to the extent that he is a member of the tribe, and if ever there is a conflict between him and the tribe, the interests of the tribe must prevail. But what is more striking is that in the treatment which the individual members of the tribe give to each other there is still a surprising degree of trust, sympathy and affection. They may lack the amenities of life which the advanced societies have at their command; they may lack also the knowledge and skill which give the advanced societies their present strength and power to dominate over others; but their superiority is beyond question if judged by the yardstick of such human qualities as courtesy, courage, compassion, fellow-feeling, love of truth, honour and beauty.

This leads to the very basic question : How is it that while the so-called backward communities have such fine qualities among them and are able to maintain their interpersonal relationship at such a high level of peace and amity, the so-called advanced societies have the problem of their interpersonal relationship befouled by distrust and suspicion ? The reason is that unfortunately while we have rightly stressed the need for technological advancement over the past few decades, we have, in that proportion, neglected the cultivation of those human values which make up man's most cherished heritage. This has resulted in a steady erosion of those qualities which give man the superior status which he rightly enjoys in the animal world. It is certainly necessary and desirable that efforts should be directed towards the acquisition of knowledge and of the skill to use it to promote human welfare; but it will be a sad mistake if it is thought that human welfare can be best secured by merely producing wealth to satisfy man's physical needs, by raising his standard of living so that he can have within his easy reach as much of luxury goods as he needs to make life easy and comfortable for him. Human welfare rests not merely on material possessions, though they are certainly necessary for physical well-being, but, in a much larger measure, on a man's outlook on life, on what importance he attaches to the qualities of his mind and heart rather than to his material possessions.

If the end-result of what passes as human welfare is intended to be happiness, it is worth while to remember the note of warning Swami Vivekananda sounded long ago : 'Machines never made mankind happy and never will make. He who is trying to make us believe this will claim that happiness is in the machine; but it is always in the mind. That man alone who is the lord of his mind can become happy, and none else.'[1] Although man's ingenuity has now succeeded in devising gadgets which give man complete control over the forces of external nature and thereby place at his disposal comforts deemed impossible till a few years back, there is no indication that this has made him happier than before; rather, he is unhappier than before, his internal conflicts and tensions having increased and he being constantly at war

[1] *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, Vol. IV (1962), p. 155.

with himself. This happens inevitably because, while everything possible has been done over a century or more now to ensure physical well-being, little or nothing has been done to improve man's mental character. If it is true that compared with the body, the mind plays a more important part in determining man's happiness, it must be admitted that it is a sad omission that no step has been taken so far or is being taken even now, to help man gain control over his mind. The Biblical remark that it would not profit man to gain the whole world if he lost his soul is still valid, but this obvious truism seems somehow to have escaped our attention, and we have been much too busy trying to multiply our worldly possessions while we have let the mind rule over us with its anger, hatred, jealousy and other base passions. We do not seem to have ever grasped the wisdom of Buddha's saying that one who conquers his mind is a true 'conqueror', with the result that while we have shown extraordinary courage and skill in conquering external nature, we have not accepted the challenge which conquering our internal nature poses. Man has already come a long way since the day he was merely an animal, but the process of his evolution is continuing and must continue for a long spell yet before he becomes a real marvel in moral and spiritual growth. Biologically he has grown much over the centuries in developing into what he is now and it is doubtful if he going to have any further biological growth in a marked degree; intellectually too his growth has been phenomenal and in the case of some individuals at least it has reached a high water-mark one hardly ever thought possible. Yet the process is going on and it is to be hoped that it will go on for many centuries to come, though the growth that man will have henceforth will be more on the moral and cultural plane than on the physical and intellectual. It is heartening to know that even those biologists who can by no stretch of imagination be described as idealists are propounding similar theories as may be seen from the following remarks of Julian Huxley and H. B. D. Kettlebell:

> '...Modern man's evolution has been and still is primarily cultural, concerned with changes in ideas and techniques, in social organisation and artistic expression and only secondarily biological, concerned with genetic changes in bodily or mental capacities.
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> 'Man, in fact, has embarked on a new phase of evolution, the psycho-social phase, in which he has the responsibility for his own future evolution, and indeed for that of the whole planet. For this task, he must learn the rules of this new kind of evolution and study the mechanisms by which it operates. Though of course a knowledge of his animal origin and of the genetic mental and bodily capacities he has inherited from his ape-like progenitors is essential, it is unimportant compared with fuller knowledge of his cultural capacities and their possible realization in psycho-social organization.'[2]

It is to be hoped that at first some select individuals, under the compulsion of an inner urge which is difficult to explain, will feel it their responsibility as well as their privilege, to be in the vanguard of this struggle to acquire a sharply defined mature moral personality. They will think no price too high to do this. Gradually this urge will spread to other members of the race, who will then follow the trail which those singular individuals will have blazed. That this is not a mere hope but a distinct possibility was stressed by Le Comte Du Nouy in his well-known book *Human Destiny*, in which he said, 'But, from now on because of his conscience, it is the individual alone and no longer the species. He will prove

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[2] *Charles Darwin and His World*. Thames and Hudson, London, p. 92.

that he is the forerunner of the future race, the ancestor of the spiritually perfect man. . . .'[3] In the sense that this process has to be spearheaded by a few inspired individuals, the responsibility of man himself in his evolution is great, for he alone of the entire animal world can give it a thrust and a direction of his own choice, such as may take him some day to the unscaled peaks of moral well-being. This is the challenging task to which man must address himself now. To quote le Comte Du Nouy again, 'Thus, man bears a part of responsibility in evolution. His free choice will act very much as natural selection has done so far. It is he who must give the fillip which will orient his individual destiny and that of the species in the direction of progress.'[4]

The trouble with us is that we think that science offers us the key to all our problems, which of course it does not and cannot. Science certainly has already done many wonders and is perhaps going to do many more wonders, but this does not mean that it is without limitations. Certainly it cannot solve the problems of right and wrong, of the steps man should take to overcome the weaknesses to which he is subject. Talking about the limitations of science, a testimony given by Einstein on this question will be of interest : 'Science can only ascertain what *is*, but not what *should be*.'[5] It can tell us about the evil that is there in the heart of man but cannot help remove it. And if ignoring the help that religion offers and depending entirely upon science even for problems outside its domain, man allows the evil that is in his heart to dominate unchecked as he does now, if he makes no attempt to control it, to improve the quality of his thoughts, feelings and reactions, he remains a savage notwithstanding all the finery with which he bedecks himself and all the clever gadgets he may have invented.

It is not fashionable nowadays to talk of religion, but the situation does call for rethinking on the question of religion and some heart-searching to find out if the answer to the problem does not lie in this much maligned word. The popular notion about religion is that it requires man to surrender himself to a force called God about whose existence he has no proof and about whose fairness and benignity also he has every reason to be sceptical. The position in brief is that he cannot accept that there is any extraneous power which can and does in fact interfere in his personal affairs ; should there be such a power—though he is sure that there is no such power—the least he could do would be to fight it.

But if religion is defined as a science—and a science based on verified and verifiable truths—no one can object to it. This, however, is what the proponents of religions claim it to be. According to them, it is a discipline which helps man transmute his inner nature into something vastly better, something which bears a close resemblance to the nature which we attribute to God. What is important is the fact of the change which thus takes place in man ; and it has been found from the experience of countless people of different countries and different ages that this very desirable change does take place. If truly religious people—it does not matter if such people are found to be pitifully small in number—do show that they have a better regard for truth, that they love their fellow men and are relatively less selfish, that they are more tolerant towards others and are more peace-loving, that they are more happy and contented even though they are not rich—in short, if they are found to be

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[3] *Human Destiny,* Longman, Green & Co., 1947, p. 116-17.

[4] Ibid. p. 119.

[5] Einstein : *My Views,* Rupa & Co., 1967, p. 68.

a better set of people as compared with those who are professedly irreligious, then it must be admitted that there is something in religion which makes this difference possible and which, therefore, qualifies it for a close study and also for acceptance and practice. Even admitting that every individual who practises the tenets of religion does not succeed in becoming a saint, the mere fact that he makes an honest attempt to lead a clean life is enough justification for religion as a way of life. If it does nothing else, it at least gives the motivation to struggle for a higher and nobler life with some definite goals to pursue and some code of conduct to conform to under all circumstances. In the absence of religion this motivation is lacking and man is then left to the mercy of his mind's diverse pulls, without a sense of purpose, without a reason to struggle for a lofty end.

The important point to remember is that it will be taking a lop-sided view if by advancement is meant merely advancement in technological skills and material prosperity, though they too are necessary; advancement to be complete and satisfying must include also advancement in moral qualities, a consummation which takes place only after a long process of training and discipline under the compulsion of a religious motivation. According to Whitehead:

> 'Science is concerned with the general conditions which are observed to regulate physical phenomena; whereas religion is wholly wrapped up in the contemplation of moral and aesthetic values. On the one hand there is the law of gravitation, and on the other, the contemplation of the beauty of holiness. What one sees, the other misses; and *vice versa*.'[6]

There is clearly a case for the union of the two—science and religion—, one to give man the knowledge and skill necessary to harness the forces of nature so as to secure the amount of physical well-being he desires, and the other to give him the *raison d'être* as well as the knowledge and discipline necessary to bring to the surface the moral and spiritual qualities (in the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'Divinity') lying hidden in the folds of his being. Most of man's present ills can be traced to the fact that he has depended too much on science, forgetting that religion too has its part to play to give him the real key to happiness, which is self-discipline. It is interesting to recall in this connection Einstein's remark about the mutual dependence of science and religion, which ran as follows: 'Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.'[7] This may be imagery but it represents the finding of a world-famous scientist whose devotion to science is matched only by his concern for human welfare.

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[6] *Science and the Modern World,* Cambridge University Press, 12th impression, p. 229.

[7] Loc. cit.

IN SEARCH OF A HIDDEN GOD

Swami Shraddhananda

It is not difficult to believe in the existence of God when we carefully follow the arguments philosophers and thinkers have given to us through the ages in its favour. There should be a designer at the back of this vast edifice of the universe who must necessarily possess an intelligence infinitely superior to ours. There must be a ruler to guide and control the endless phenomena of nature. Again, when we think of man's life and motives we cannot but feel that there must be a moral law binding the individual to the group and this moral law is not the arbitrary creation of man. It has its origin in a Cosmic Being who is the essence of truth and righteousness. These and similar reasonings are often sufficient to build up a faith in God and to relieve the tensions of doubt from our minds. Most persons remain contented when they can live their lives with such a working faith in God. It is not necessary for them, they feel, to delve into the mysteries of the Supernatural. It is enough to believe that there is a God—a kind and all-knowing God who is guiding our destiny. In moments of crisis and difficulties the faithful can pray to Him for help. Religion for the majority of people is just this : an intellectual and emotional belief in God and the use of that belief to avert difficulties in life.

These persons can be placed in the two categories of *ārta* (distressed) and *arthārthi* (needy) mentioned in the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Superior devotees are they who seek God more deeply. They belong according to the *Gītā* to the categories of *jijñāsu* and *jñāni*. They do not want to merely believe in God ; they seek to know God. They do not need God for material help ; they need Him for their spiritual fulfilment. In the words of the Psalmist :

'As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God'.[1]

If the soul pants for God it is asking much more than intellectual belief. It is craving for a direct experience of God. When our search for God has reached this level serious religion has begun for us. Saints and seers assure us that if we can evince an intense desire for the vision of God He is sure to respond to our prayer. Says the Upaniṣad :

> 'Neither by the study of the scriptures, nor by intellectual excellence, nor by hearing numerous opinions can the Supreme Spirit be realized. Only to one who earnestly longs for Him does He reveal His true nature.'[2]

Sri Ramakrishna compared this longing to the 'rosy dawn' before sunrise :

> 'After the dawn out comes the sun. Longing is followed by the vision of God.'
> 'God reveals Himself to a devotee who feels drawn to Him by the combined force of these three attractions : the attraction of worldly possessions for the worldly man ; the child's attraction for its mother ; and the husband's attraction for the chaste wife.'

Yet the road of earnest search is never an easy one. At times the seeker seems to have come to a dead end and the last ounce of patience appears to have been used up. Often doubt, confusion and fear assail the mind. Sometimes in despair the devotee has to voice the painful utterance of the prophet Isaiah : 'Verily Thou art a hidden

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1 Psalms 42.

2 *Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.23 ; *Muṇḍaka* Up. 3.2.3.

God.' Mystical literature is strewn with abundant evidence of the deep agony scorching the heart of the spiritual explorer expressed in poems, couplets, soliloquies and so on. These are beautiful compositions bespeaking the faith and love of devout souls, but the dominating note is one of a tremendous mental suffering that the devotee experiences because of his failure to see God. The mystical writer uses many symbols to describe the plight of spiritual struggle that has no hope of immediate fulfilment. A traveller lost in a trackless wilderness, a boat tossing in tempestuous seas, a bird in flight overtaken by storm and thunder are some examples.

There is really no contradiction between those statements of the scriptures where great hope and assurance are given to an earnest seeker and the utterances which sternly warn him of the perilous journey, the pitfalls, and the hardships. When the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says: 'The path is as inaccessible as the sharpened edge of a razor'; or the *Gītā* declares: 'One in a million can know God truly', the purpose is not to discourage us but to emphasize the necessity of caution, discrimination, courage and perseverance at every step of our spiritual adventure. When on the other hand, we read in the Upaniṣads that the Supreme Self is 'known with every piece of knowledge' (*Kena Up.* 2.4), or 'He is shining very close to our heart' (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 2.2.1), or in the *Bhagavad Gītā*: 'Very soon he becomes righteous and attains eternal peace' (9.31), we are not to understand that a quick and easy solution of our spiritual search is indicated. Spiritual illumination is a great treasure for which the *sādhaka* has surely to pay the price. There is no short cut or over-simplification. The purport of the scriptural passages in the latter case is that if one is sincere and prepared to undergo the necessary disciplines, one certainly can find the Divine within one's own consciousness as the effulgent all-purifying Light, the Holy of holies.

Neither a blind self-complacent optimism nor an ungrounded depressing pessimism but a balanced attitude of hope, courage and unrelenting effort seems to be the healthy effective way. Yes, when we are in search of God, God for a long time may remain for us a hidden God, a deaf, blind and even a dead God. But if our objective is not a superficial acceptance of God, but a deep conviction which results from direct experience, we shall have to face the hide-and-seek game that the Divine plays with His devotees. We must tell our mind that behind the clouds there is certainly the sun. We must go on praying unceasingly: 'The face of truth is hidden by a golden disc; remove that cover, O Sun, for me who am dedicated to the vision of truth.'[3]

The golden disc stands for the apparent charm and glamour of the world. In early morning what we see of the sun is just a beautiful disc of golden hue which is so pleasant to look at. We can draw pictures of it, and write poems about it. But it is still far far from the truth of the blazing sun. Covered with the golden disc the sun is as it were a toy, an object for idle reverie. It does not radiate the heat and light necessary for all life. In like manner the life of sense pleasure, however attractive it may be on the surface, is a veil that hides the truth of God. That veil has somehow to go if the eternal shining light of God is to be seen.

Sings a Bengali mystic:

> 'Oh Lord, even though Thou art so close to me residing right inside my heart, I am foolishly led to think that Thou art far far away.
> 'Just as the bee flies far and near in search of flowers even though it does not know where the proper flowers have bloomed, in the same way my heart

[3] *Īśa Up.* 25.

wants to run in quest of Thee though I do not know where Thou art to be found.

'Just as the musk deer runs hither and thither infatuated by the fragrance of the musk in its own navel, similarly I wander heaven and earth seeking Thee, even though all the time I am carrying Thee in my heart.

'Just as in a puppet show the operator, remaining hidden behind the stage, moves the marionettes, in the same manner, Oh Lord, in this stage of the world we are the puppets in Thy grand performance while Thou hast all the time kept Thyself concealed.

'Just as a blind man, even though bathed in a sea of light does not know what light is, similarly, even though we are constantly living in Thy truth we are not able to discover Thee.'

As we continue our serious search for God through prayers, contemplation, self-control, holy company and other similar means, we slowly begin to realize that our intimate quest has to be directed mostly within ourselves rather than without. Very appropriately did St. Augustine write :

'I found Thee not without, O Lord.
I sought Thee without in vain
For Thou art within.'

The Upaniṣads over and over again state clearly that God as Supreme Spirit can never be comprehended objectively. 'He is never heard, but is the Hearer ; He is never reached by thought, but is the Thinker ; He is never known, but is the Knower.'[4] 'That which man does not see with the eyes, but that by which man perceives the activities of the eye, know that alone to be Brahman and not what people worship as an object.'[5]

Sri Ramakrishna reminisces: 'Then a change came over me. The mind left the plane of the *līlā* and ascended to the *nitya.* I no longer enjoyed seeing forms of God ; I said to myself, "They come and go." I lifted my mind above them. I began to meditate on the Indivisible *Saccidānanda.*'[6]

Objective spiritual experiences have their great value in elevating the sense-bound mind to the level of the supersensuous. They are important signposts of our progress. But as it is pointed out in the scriptures and as Sri Ramakrishna also testifies, they cannot finally quell the unrest of our soul in its search for the hidden God. It is only when we retreat from the line of the object and stand on that of the Subject that we are on our way to the ultimate discovery. All objective experiences including the mystical are in the last analysis projections of the Eternal Subject—the Self of everything, the Supreme Consciousness. When we have known this great fact God can no longer wear any mask. The agony of our search will then come to its end and God will ever remain revealed to us as our true Self.

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[4] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* 3.8.11.

[5] *Kena Up.* 1.7.

[6] *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4. Dialogue on April 12th, 1885.



HUMAN TRENDS

VEDANTA AT WORK IN INDIA

In the West, teachers of Vedanta place emphasis on its philosophy and little mention is made here of the wonderful work in all fields of service being done in India under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. On a recent visit to India it was, therefore, both edifying and gratifying to see and learn first-hand how the ideas and hopes of Swami Vivekananda to uplift the masses of that country are being carried out by the dedicated monks of the Ramakrishna Order as well as by interested lay and householder devotees. While in Calcutta, I visited the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan and Narendrapur and feel it is a privilege to comment on some of the fine work being done at each of these places.

Today, after a very humble beginning, the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan, is one of the largest general hospitals in Calcutta. Swami Dayananda, while head of the Vedanta Society in San Francisco, was very much impressed by health services in that city, especially in maternity and pediatric work. He returned to India in 1932 with the hope of starting work along these lines there. This he did in a rented house with the help of two American nurses who had returned to India with him and also with the help of interested Indian nurses and doctors. The obstacles were many, one of which was, quite understandably, criticism of a monk for engaging in such a worldly matter as maternity. Yet Swami Dayananda had seen a great need for this type of service in his country and being sincere in his dedication and determination to do something about the appalling rate of mortality in mothers and infants, he persevered in his chosen work, ignoring all criticism and obstacles. At first, expectant mothers were reluctant to come to his establishment for care and to have their babies, but as word of the fine work in antenatal, natal and postnatal care spread, more and more women willingly came. When the inevitable good results of his work were perceived, public support and sympathy also began to grow and it was only a matter of time until larger permanent quarters were needed. A site was found and purchased at 99 Sarat Bose Road, the present location of of the hospital. Construction was started early in 1938 and the institution moved to its new home after being consecrated on May 31, 1939. Since that time the work started by Swami Dayananda has expanded, developing quickly into a first-class maternity hospital and then into the present first-class general hospital which

specializes in all types of medical care. Expansion continues in the form of a seven-storeyed hospital block now under construction, and it is hoped the institution will soon be able to acquire some contiguous land for further expansion of facilities and services.

The Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan is, of course, administered by Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order as are hospitals throughout India. No doubt, it is the spirit of dedication evinced by the monastics that is responsible for the wonderful success of these hospitals, but it is safe to state that success is also due in a large measure to the nurses. They are not nuns in the accepted sense in that they have not formally renounced the world, but certainly some of them are in their dedication to their chosen work and in their reverence for the Swamis and their superiors. This dedication is exemplified in the capping ceremony by lighting of a lamp—the symbol of selfless service. From observation, it is apparent that the nurses of the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan are a credit to the nursing profession, bringing to it high ideals of service and not just regarding it as a means of livelihood.

While on the subject of hospitals, though I was unable to visit it, I would like to mention the Mayavati Charitable Hospital of which all too little is known. Here in the West, Mayavati usually conjures up in the mind only the Advaita Ashrama situated in the remote and lofty Himalayas. It was, therefore, a pleasant surprise indeed to learn of the Mayavati Charitable Hospital. This hospital, too, had a very humble beginning. It came into being through the sheer need of villagers in the far-off reaches of the Himalayas. Knowing of the Ashrama at Mayavati, villagers, needing help, came from miles around and they could not be turned away by the kindhearted monks of the Ramakrishna Order who gave whatever assistance they could to all who came to them seeking help. As a consequence, a humble dispensary first came into being in 1903, and since then a growing number of patients have come travelling long miles on foot or horseback to this haven of relief and succour. Over the years it has become a small, fairly well-equipped rural hospital where service is given to all irrespective of caste or creed in a spirit of worship.

A fine example of service in the field of education is Narendrapur. Narendrapur was started in North Calcutta during the Bengal Famine of 1943 and first served as a home for poor and orphan boys. It moved to its present site in 1957 and since then has extended its activities into other fields and is now carrying out a more comprehensive programme of service to the community with special emphasis on education and training. In the field of education a boy can receive his entire education right on through college at Narendrapur. Wonderful as this is, to me more wonderful is the work done there to help the blind. In India's rural areas, possibly because of improper diet and lack of facilities to detect eye disorders at an early age, there is a high degree of blindness. The Blind Boys' Academy started at Narendrapur in 1957 is engaged in carrying out a comprehensive plan for the education and training of blind boys so that some at least of India's 4.3 million blind people may have the satisfaction of having fulfilled what is a chief aspiration of every normal human being, and that is to be economically independent. Here at the Blind Boys' Academy those blind boys who have the intellectual sharpness are educated to become teachers, journalists, lawyers, etc., or if musically gifted or talen-

ted, they are taught advanced music with the possibility of becoming professional musicians or music teachers. Most of the blind boys, however, are taught a trade so they can earn a livelihood as some type of skilled craftsman. All the boys are physically examined when first admitted to the Blind Boy's Academy at Narendrapur and it often happens that though a boy is known to be blind, there is yet really no damage to his eyes. With proper care and treatment sight has been restored in many instances.

Yet another wonderful type of work being done at Narendrapur is in the agricultural field. Boys from villages and rural areas are taught scientific farming, especially poultry-keeping. They can then return to their homes and introduce the better farming practices they have learned to their families and neighbours with resultant better crops. It is hoped that such methods will insure in the not too distant future even a surplus food crop in West Bengal, and there is every indication of this possibility becoming a reality.

It is appropriate to mention also the Akhil Bharat Vivekananda Yuva Mahamandal. This organization is not under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Order; but to be sure it derives its inspiration and strength from the ideals and teachings of Vivekananda. In India, as elsewhere throughout the world these days, youth is restless and seeming to lack direction and purpose. Thinking persons of that country felt this state of affairs could only be remedied by placing before their young people abiding values which are true to the ancient cultural traditions of the land and yet modern enough to inspire them to selfless activity for the upliftment of society. In India it is believed that Swami Viveka nanda provides the youth with such an ideal of dedication and selfless service and it was this belief that brought the Akhil Bharat Vivekananda Yuva Mahamandal into being in Calcutta in the later part of 1967.

There is no better way to explain the aims and objects of the Mahamandal than to quote from their literature:

> '.... The object of the Mahamandal is to propagate abiding values of Indian culture as generally embodied in the character-building and man-making ideals of Swami Vivekananda particularly among the youth, and to harness youthful energy in a disciplined manner for nation-building activities through selfless service to the country, the ultimate aim being to have better human material for a better society.
>
> 'The field of the Mahamandal is the whole of India. It respects her heritage and culture, and makes no discrimination on grounds of religion, caste, or creed.'

There are units of the Mahamandal throughout West Bengal, Assam, Orissa and Bihar. In Calcutta alone there were 10 units formed during the first year of its existence and, no doubt, this number has since increased as more and more people hear of the work being done and are inspired to form new units. The organization works quietly, shunning newspaper publicity and the like, and it was only by chance that I learned of it at all, and this was through being invited to attend an evening study meeting of one of the Calcutta units. Many types of social work are undertaken by the different units such as free coaching, adult education, first aid, distribution of garments, relief to indigent persons and the distressed in times of natural calamities, to mention just a few; but important as all this is, most important is the spirit in which the work is done. The individual members of each Mahamandal unit are aware of the urgent need to infuse a sense of self-discipline, team-

work and above all, *śraddhā,* in the minds of the young people with whom they work, and this is done by placing before them the ideas and ideals of Swami Vivekananda, who at one time said: 'It is our privilege to be allowed to be charitable for only then can we grow.' Stress is given, therefore, on engaging in work in a sense of service and without any selfish motive, for it is through such work that character is developed and through which soceity as a whole is ultimately benefited.

Yes, India is fortunate in having produced a patriot-saint of the stature of Swami Vivekananda to hold up as an ideal for the young to follow. As his cardinal teaching of service to God in man grows and spreads through the dedicated and inspired work of the monastics and the lay workers of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, as evidenced in the hospitals and schools and other institutions they administer; and through other organizations such as the Akhil Bharat Vivekananda Yuva Mahamandal, his dream of the upliftment of India's masses comes daily closer to fulfilment.

ANNA NYLUND

TWO ANCIENT RELIGIONS: JUDAISM AND VEDANTA

RABBI ASHER BLOCK

I take as my text a striking statement by Swami Vivekananda (which he made in one of his addresses in the West):

> We must ask, what may be that Force which causes this afflicted and suffering people, the Hindu, and the Jewish too (the two races from which have originated all the great religions of the world), to survive, when other nations perish? The cause can only be their Spiritual Force.[1]

Here we have a precious clue—from one of the giants of the Spirit—as to what is at the root of the religious experience of mankind. If only we could get a glimpse, an insight, into the nature of 'Spiritual Force', we would then be able to unravel, as it were, the whole secret and mystery of human survival.

To begin with, let us look at the Jewish and Vedantic traditions in their broadest perspective. Both, it happens, have an almost identical formulation of the basic pattern of religion. In the classic Jewish text, *Pirke Avot* (which may be translated as 'Chapters on Religious Essentials'), the key teaching is, 'The world stands upon three things: upon Torah or spiritual wisdom; upon the worship of God; and upon deeds of love.'[2] This teaching is directly traced to the Revelation Moses received at Mt. Sinai; and, indeed, it is quite clear that the spiritual wisdom of the Ten Commandments does include worshipful relations to God and ethical relations to man.

We find an almost exact analogue of this structure in the three basic Yogas taught by Vedanta—the three great pathways that man must follow in order to attain fulfilment in life:

(1) the path of *jñāna*—intellectual discrimination or wisdom;

[1] *'Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, Vol. I (1957), p. 383.

[2] *Pirke Avot* (usually translated as 'Ethics of the Fathers') 1,2.

(2) the path of *bhakti*—devotional love of God; and
(3) the path of *karma*—ethical or selfless action in relation to fellow man.

Conventional Religion

Even if Judaism and Vedanta had done nothing more than formulate these three pathways, it would have been a noble contribution. But this alone is hardly an adequate guide. For people everywhere in all religions have a way of getting bogged down in all these paths; so we need something more basic to see us through.

Take, for example, the path of wisdom, or knowledge of God. In so many religious circles, so much of interest and energy is focussed upon what is merely academic: the study of texts, the elaboration of dogmas, the dissemination of creeds, and endless theological debates. Even though the subject matter be related to God, still such intellectualism is very dry and lifeless religion, for God is not in books, in preachments, or in arguments. Sri Ramakrishna used the vivid parable of an almanac that predicts a heavy rainfall for the year. But take that almanac (said he) and squeeze it and squeeze it, and not a drop of water comes out. So it is with academic religion. Its God is only a word, a concept—not a reality, not a force in life. Human character is not changed thereby.

Now, many people, sensing this truth that creedalism and theology lack something vital, swing the pendulum in the opposite direction—to society and activity. And then we have what may be termed 'social' religion. Here there is a great emphasis on philanthropy, on public welfare, and on social reform. But many who do not believe in God at all are intensely involved in all these areas. And even with regard to man, as often as not, those engaged in such works become ambitious and self-centred, and even quarrelsome toward those who thwart their egos in this effort, which is proof that altruism and genuine love are missing. Hence, though there is a *force* in such activities, there is no assurance that it is a *spiritual* or selfless force.

Thus we see that in terms of popular theology and morality, though they might have their utility, it is not likely that we shall find through them that Spiritual Force which Swami Vivekananda spoke of as the survival power of the great and ancient faiths. And as to the third area, which most people would consider the heart of religion—viz. worship—here, too, we must be careful not to judge by appearances. Most conventional worship falls into two categories, which, though not 'academic' and 'social' in the same obvious sense as before, are nonetheless disguised extensions of them. I am referring to symbolism and ritualism.

Symbols, because of an aesthetic quality, usually call forth an emotional response. But what is the reality behind them? They are intended as representations of God, but if we have never seen or experienced God, what are we 'representing' by them? Here, too, as was the case above, many persons, suspecting an ultimate emptiness in mere symbols, will gravitate toward ritualism in their worship. Rituals have movement; rituals usually involve groups, and are associated with historical or social values. When such groups come together for their set occasions, when they sing their spirited songs and offer their gifts, they feel they have engaged in inspiration, in fellowship, and in good works. These may be all right as surface experience, but once again, there is no assurance that they are intrinsically related to God or that they will call forth results spiritual in character. In other words, they may only be subtle forms of social religion. Thus, if we are mercilessly honest with ourselves, we are pressed to the wall as to what is Spiritual Force. This is one of the grave problems of convention-

al religion: in each path there are serious diversions, and one is not led to the Goal.

Another problem is that, as commonly practised, one path seems to exclude and contradict the others. By way of illustrating this kind of frustration, and also of foreshadowing a solution, I should like to mention some personal experiences.

I was born into an intensely Orthodox Jewish family, and was raised from the start in a thoroughly American environment. Thus, I was confronted quite early with two distinctive cultures and ways of life. Judaism was naturally dominant in the home and in private education; Americanism was dominant in the public schools and in the total atmosphere round about. Though, theoretically, the American way of life is not committed to any particular religious faith, there is no denying the fact that Christianity is the majority religion with a quasi-official status of its own. And that presented a peculiar challenge. In the relations of one group to the other, it appeared that both were operating on a double standard.

Christianity proclaimed, on the one hand, that it was a universal faith (beyond national or ethnic bounds), but at the same time it raised a sharp barrier between those who accepted the exclusive divinity of Christ and all the rest of mankind who were outside the fold of salvation. Within a democratic society like America, that meant that religious minorities could be accepted on a political base as 'fellow-citizens' but not on a spiritual base as 'co-religionists'. In Judaism, too—partly no doubt as a reaction to such standards, and partly through inconsistencies of its own—there was, on the one hand, a belief in monotheism, the omnipresence of God and the oneness of mankind; and, on the other, various notions of religious 'chosenness' and of historical and ethnic separatism. The fact that two religious communities could live side by side, each preaching oneness, yet both practising divisiveness, contributed in no small measure to the disillusionment I began to feel at that time toward all religion.

By the end of college days, though I had already embarked upon a course of rabbinical studies, I felt largely convinced that such conventional orthodoxy was not the answer. And it was within the setting of a less rigid theological school (to which I then transferred) that I had the opportunity of encountering more liberal views, both within Judaism and Christianity. The intellectual climate was now such that the possibilities of a greater brotherhood among men appeared to be more real. But, strangely enough, with the relaxation of dogmatism came also the weakening of devotion. So here was a curious situation. Those who were most devout in their ritual worship of God were exclusive toward other faiths, while the modernist creeds that were tolerant and accepting of other religions were mainly uncommitted in personal piety.

Why, I wondered, could no way be found to observe simultaneously the two great commandments of both the Old and the New Testaments? Why should one have to choose between 'loving God with all our heart' and 'loving our neighbour as ourself'? If this be necessarily so, I thought to myself, what a dreadful choice to have to make in the name of religion! But intuitively I also felt that surely the great teachers of religion who had formulated these basic principles of love of God and love of man, never intended that they be separated, and even must have demonstrated how they can be combined. And indeed, before long, a dual discovery did come forth. Both within my own heritage and also beyond the Judaeo-Christian confines, two new worlds opened up, as it were, which shed a new light on the essence of religion. Moreover, as time went on, the 'world

within' and the 'world without' turned out to be amazingly akin to each other!

Getting Down to the Roots

The new 'world within' was the Hasidic or mystical tradition within Judaism, which was present at all times, but which, unfortunately, is often overlooked or misunderstood. Actually, Hasidism is not different from Judaism itself, except that it seeks to make more explicit and to take more seriously its core and substance: viz. the three pillars of spiritual wisdom, devotion to God, and service to man.

At different periods of Jewish history, this special emphasis took on different forms. In the days of the Second Temple, for instance, there was a group known as the Essenes, whose stress seemed to be on living a dedicated community life. During the Middle Ages, when the study of the *Kabalah* was in the ascendancy, primary attention was upon knowledge of the unity of God. The most recent manifestation was the Hasidic movement started by Israel Baal-Shem Tov, and its motivating force was the absorbing love of God.

First, let us consider knowledge of God. In this regard, the Kabalists asked some simple yet pointed questions. How shall we understand the basic instruction of Moses, when he declared: 'Hear, O Israel, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal One'? Though this is the central Jewish prayer, very few really think about it. Also, how shall we understand the Biblical teaching that 'man was created in the image of God'? Our life is subject to manifoldness and to change, to birth and to death. How are we related to God who is one and eternal?

The answer the Kabalah gave was: 'the image of God' obviously does not refer to man's body and mind, it refers only to the soul. Hence, for us earnestly to believe in God requires that we identify ourselves with our highest Self, with our inner Immortal Spirit, and not with our mortal bodies or our self-centred minds. We must strive to liberate ourselves from false attachments to these lower elements. And, with the help of God, we can. For (the Kabalists added) this is what the opening of the Decalogue promises: 'I am the Eternal thy God, who brings thee out of bondage!' Here is a teaching which, in one swoop, gets to the heart of Judaism, and pinpoints the ultimate goal of our lives. This is Torah-wisdom in its highest sense; this is practical knowledge of God, for it relates directly to our lives and character—to our purpose here on earth.

And this approach to Torah is surprisingly similar to the Vedantic approach to the Vedas. In Hinduism, too, there are different levels of insight and observance. Various parts of Scriptures feature rituals, legend or philosophy. Vedanta highlights the latter part of the Vedas—the Upaniṣads—which bids man rise above physical and mental limitations, and whose central theme (to quote the great commentator Śaṅkara) is 'the knowledge of Brahman (or God), the knowledge that destroys the bonds of ignorance, and leads to the supreme goal of freedom'. See how similar they are!

One of the wonderful advantages of being able to compare one ancient religion with another is that we have a verification of truth. But, much more important than that, we have a reinforcement of experience. In the last analysis, religion cannot stand on philosophy or theory alone—beautiful and logical as that might be—it must stand on the solid rock of actual living experience. When we examine experience, we find the results are often altogether different from what theory alone might indicate. In the one case, there is a static view of life; in the other, a dynamic adjustment to living.

We have two examples of that in terms of the application of the truth just mentioned: one in personal life, in relating body to soul; the other in cultural life, in relating particulars to universals. In the matter of man's soul, one might 'logically' say that since the body and mind are lower elements, one should deliberately suppress them. Indeed, there have been many religionists who tried to build a religious system on that very premise: 'the flesh is evil'; 'man is a sinner', and so on. Hence, for some, asceticism and mortification became virtues; and, for most, who could not abide by these, there were feelings of weakness and guilt. It is highly noteworthy that Vedanta and Judaism, in the mainstream of their history, did not sanction such negativism. Their basic approach is one of growth and (if we may use the psychological term) one of sublimation, for that is the law of life. Body is to mind, and mind is to spirit, as childhood is to adolescence and adolescence is to maturity. Childhood is not evil; it just has to be outgrown.

Similarly, it is interesting in this regard to examine the attitudes that people have toward universal and particular forms in religion. Many will say, for instance, that Buddhists and Christians are more 'universal' than Hindus or Jews because they do not reside within a national or ethnic milieu. But here again, it is not a question of form, but of attachment to form. Realistically, when Christians and Buddhists examine their own lives, do they find that, by and large, they are free of all national feeling? No. They are nationalists of many countries, instead of one: that is the usual difference. Surely the religious loyalty of a person should be far above any national or ethnic allegiance. But that applies equally to all persons everywhere, regardless of the particular social or geographic environment in which they are.

If religion, bearing the name of God, is deliberately 'nationalized' or 'racialized' or embroiled in politics, or diverted into a preoccupation with, let us say, wealth or power, diet or dress—that is a perversion and degradation of religion. On the other hand, when peoples like the Hindus or the Hebrews find themselves naturally in a certain environment and, for them, because of an inner yearning, a city is not just a city, but becomes a Jerusalem or Benares; and a river is not just a river but becomes a sacred Ganges and a purifying Jordan; and a language is not just language, but Sanskrit and Ivrit, 'holy tongues'; and civil servants are more than just that, they are brahmins, or priests and Levites; and constitutions are not just legal documents, but Torah and Veda; and food is *prasāda*; and the table is a 'holy altar'; and so on and on—that is something else altogether.

The basic experience of both Judaism and Vedanta over the centuries has been that the essential thing in religion is the control and direction of one's mind, and the purity of one's heart; and that in relation to that, work as work or outer situations as situations are a kind of double-edged sword, serving for good or for ill, depending on how we use them. In Sanskrit, the word *karma,* when referring to ordinary work and reactions, implies a form of bondage, but *karma yoga* is a method of using dedicated effort as a means of emancipation. Likewise, there is a word in Hebrew, *avodah,* which means both 'work' and 'worship'. On a low level, with impure motives, it spells compulsion and drudgery; but altruistically and with one-pointed consecration, it can lead us to God.

Tangible Love of God

We come now to the next major area of religion: love of God.

After having defined God as the Unity behind all division and the Permanence

beyond all change, and then recognizing that practically all our life is steeped, physically and mentally, in variety and change, we must ask: What realistically can it mean to us to know God and to love God? Along these lines, there is a moving dialogue in the early part of the Book of Exodus.[3] God, at the Burning Bush, bid Moses go and speak to the enslaved Israelites in Egypt, to tell them of their coming redemption. Whereupon Moses asks (what is essentially a very 'modern' question): When I come to them, and they demand to know, what is the Name of Him (who will redeem), what shall I say? How to identify God in some tangible way? And God replies: '*Ehyeh*, I am a Reality ... (and for purposes of identification) tell the Israelites, "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob sent me unto you." This is My Name forever, and My Remembrance unto all generations.' Thus, at the very start of Judaism, God becomes known through the medium of the patriarchs, or men of God.

Of course, as time went on, the Israelites had the blessed opportunity of beholding that Reality, not only out of the past but in their living present—namely, in the personality of Moses himself. At Mt. Sinai, they lovingly entreated him: 'Speak thou unto us, and we will hear.'[4] Through him they would know the word of the Lord. And Moses himself acknowledged his role as mediator between them and God. In Deuteronomy we read: 'And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them: Hear, O Israel ... the Lord our God made a covenant with us.... Face to face did the Lord speak with you on the mountain out of the fire, as I stood between the Lord and you to convey unto you the word of the Lord.'[5]

[3] Exodus, chapter 3, especially verses 13-15.
[4] Ibid. 20.16.
[5] Deuteronomy 5. 1-5,

Here, then, we have set forth very clearly the Divine answer to the human quest. How shall we who are so finite and earth-bound know and love God, who is infinite and eternal? We can know Him and love Him through the manifestations of His Messengers on earth. To be sure, God is everywhere—on a mountain shrouded with smoke, or in a lowly bush of the desert—but only a Moses can perceive Him there. The rest of us need something more 'personal', something closer to 'our own image', in order to detect His presence. Hence, God in His infinite mercy sends us His prophets, to redeem us from the slaveries of the world.

It is an established fact that all the major religions of the world have built their traditions around the lives of prophets—those inspired men of God who 'mediated' the Divine to the human plane of their followers. This is the tangible basis of the faiths. In reality, teachers are needed in practically every field of human endeavour from medicine to sports—wherever a personal art or skill is to be acquired. The need is accentuated in religion, because there we seek to acquire the art of all arts and the skill of all skills—viz. the transformation of personal character: how to rise above the restrictions of body and mind.

In Judaism, this principle was clearly acknowledged at all times, though its effective practice was naturally reserved for those periods and movements when love of God was earnestly sought for. For example, in general Rabbinic literature, the question was asked: How does one love God? And two broad answers were given. First, especially as children, we must learn to look upon our parents as manifestations of God on earth, and that is why, in the Decalogue, the commandment to honour father and mother was placed in the tablet of man-to-God relations. Secondly, especially as we grow up and mature, our genuine tea-

chers must be looked upon as spiritual parents. Thus the Talmud clearly states (according to the teaching of the great Rabbi Akiba) that when the Bible says 'Thou shalt revere the Lord, thy God,'[6] that includes the Sages. Similarly (in the 'Chapters on Essentials') we read: 'Let thy house be a meeting place for the wise; sit at their feet (lit. 'be covered with the dust of their feet') and drink in their words with thirst.'[7] Also, there it is taught: 'Let the reverence for thy teacher be like reverence for Heaven.'[8]

Naturally, one should be wary of unqualified teachers and false prophets. The danger of charlatanism exists in every realm. Moses himself prescribed on this matter as follows: he warned against those who would seek to beguile by 'signs and wonders' (by various occult powers).[9] He explained that this is one way in which God tests us to see whether we love Him 'with all our heart and with all our soul'. That is, many times false prophets are only a response to our own superficiality and insincerity. Hence, Moses goes on: 'Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God,'... and in days to come (i.e. when he is gone), he declares, 'The Lord thy God will raise up for thee, from the midst of thy brethren, a prophet like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken!'[10] Jewish tradition has taken that to mean that in each generation someone of the line of prophets, reaching back to Moses, will appear to help sincere seekers to find their way to God. And Moses concludes with a reliable test and proof.[11] If you say in your heart, how shall we know whether a prophetic word is from God or not? You shall know, says Moses, by whether it comes true or not—that is, by whether it brings spiritual results or not! In other words, one must sincerely try to live by what the teacher prescribes. Through prayer and spiritual practice, one will then see for one's self. The true teacher knows—without fear of contradiction—that the truth he is conveying, when properly followed, will definitely work for spiritual good.

Now, as we have said, though this truth was present throughout Judaism, it was mainly the Hasidim of the various generations who sought to put it effectively into practice. In Hasidism—ancient, mediaeval, and modern—the relationship of disciple to teacher is a central feature.

After the days of the patriarchs, and after the period of Moses and the elders, there was a strong manifestation of it during the Babylonian exile. Then the 'saving remnant' of the people clung to the spiritual giants of that day—prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Later, during the days of the Second Temple, specially intensive groups like the Hasidim (from among the Maccabees), and the Essenes (from among the Pharisees) followed in this pattern. For example, within the Essenic community, those who wished to become affiliates were required to undergo personal training under qualified guides.

In all probability, John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth were members of this group. Later, as we know, they in turn became the centres of a still newer community. What actually happened then is one of the perplexing questions of history. According to normal procedure, it would seem that the Jews would have accepted them as they did the many diverse religious teachers before them. Jesus himself taught that he came not to destroy but to fulfill, and he stressed the two great commands of love of God and love of man, even as they had been stressed by Moses, Isaiah,

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6 Ibid. 6.13; and Talmud *Kidushin*, 57a.
7 *Pirke Avot*, 1.4.
8 Ibid. 4.15.
9 Deuteronomy, 13.2-4.
10 Ibid. 18. 13-15.
11 Ibid. 18. 21, 22.

and the other Hebrew prophets. When, however, some of his followers later began to preach an exclusive Saviourhood or Messiahship—along with certain unique doctrines to support that—that went against the grain of the long earlier heritage. Before long, moderate voices on both sides gave way to a polarization of attitudes: a mood of conquest *versus* a stance of resistance.

For many centuries, because of the pressured propaganda from without, the natural tendency that had previously existed within Judaism of 'idealizing' the great teachers was almost consciously suppressed, and a dreaming about a future Messiah was stressed in its stead. In more recent centuries there has been a form of return, with the emergence of leaders like Isaac Luria, of the 16th century, and more particularly, Israel Baal-Shem of the 18th century, founder of latest Hasidic movement.

We might mention, in passing, that with regard to the Mohammedans (after the 7th century) there was the similar problem of their trying to impose their faith by force. However, at times and under conditions where this threat did not exist, there was a wholesome and even cordial relationship between the two communities.

As to the Baal-Shem himself, he was a most unusual figure. He exemplified his own central teaching that the ideal of man is to become God-like. Many eager souls, great and simple alike—first hundreds and soon thousands—clustered about him for inspiration and guidance. One outstanding Jewish teacher wrote: 'To the Hasidim, Baal-Shem is not a man who established a theory, or set forth a system, he himself was the incarnation of a theory and his whole life the revelation of a system,'[12] and in telling of his life, they omitted little of what is 'proper to an Avatar'.

As one thinks of this latest spiritual resurgence within Judaism, one cannot help but draw a vivid parallel to what happened in India in the last century. I am referring, of course, to the amazing spiritual phenomenon of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples. As Christopher Isherwood points out in his biography, 'A phenomenon is often something extraordinary and mysterious,' but also, 'a phenomenon is always a fact, an object of experience.'[13] In both East and West—in modern times—in the two ancient traditions of the world, we have witnessed a revitalization of the perennial channel of Spiritual Force.

A Realistic Morality

Such revitalization of religion affects not only the area of worship—namely, our love of God—but also morality, our relation to fellow men. Ethics—which at its root is selflessness—is very difficult to attain. Only a kind of religion which can enable a person to transcend his lower self, can help one to be moral. All the rest is just so much talk.

Some time back, one prominent preacher in New York entitled one of his messages: 'Why Religion Helps Mess Up the World'. 'The world is certainly a mess (said he), and whether or not we like to face the fact, religion helps to make it so.' He was, of course, referring to popular, conventional religion, and he had no trouble documenting its trivialities and its prejudices. Recently, on the front page of the *New York Times*, there was a report on what had been happening this last decade in racial relations in the South. Among other things, the reporter noted: 'Blacks and whites now go to baseball games, political rallies and carnivals

[12] Solomon Schechter, *Studies in Judaism* (essay on the Hasidim), Jewish Publication Society, 1896, p. 4.

[13] *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1965, p. 1. (Also published by Methuen, London, and Advaita Ashrama Calcutta 14).

together, but it is still hazardous to go to church together.' Just think of that! This is what happens when religions merely skim the surface of things. And, alas, that is true of almost all the groups. But wherever persons are ready to dive beneath the surface, to find their own true selves, the urge toward oneness with others—the feeling of love and compassion—becomes not only natural but almost irresistible.

Martin Buber, modern exponent of Hasidism, has pointed out[14] that one of the most significant things about the Hasidic teachers is that they engendered a feeling of community and a brotherly life. In like manner, S. Radhakrishnan, exponent of Eastern religions, has said of that way of life: 'By education and social discipline the individual is helped to develop the inner conviction essential for social stability.... If men conquer their own inordinate desires, this inner victory will show forth in their outer relations.'[15] And also I came across this beautiful statement in a modern devotional Christian text: 'The deeper we enter into the presence of God within ourselves, the deeper and more universal will be our love for others, the deeper will we feel fraternity with all.'[16]

The basic truth of this approach is surely clear and unassailable. There is, however, one practical aspect which deserves some consideration. It is the question of relating means to ends. There are many, among traditionalists and modernists alike, who claim that one faith alone, one Saviour alone, will serve best to unite mankind. And it must be granted that, in theory, this sounds eminently logical. God is one, Truth is one, why should we not all have one way to reach God or Truth? Well, there is one important response to that question. It is that (as we have seen earlier in matters of spiritual growth, so now in human relations) actual religious experience is far more valuable than mere logic. Experience shows that individual temperaments differ, that cultural backgrounds differ, and that we cannot force all into the same mould. In fact, to attempt to do so is to invite trouble. In actual practice, the doctrine of an exclusive prophet or prophecy usually leads to a proud and superior attitude, and, historically, has often led to persecution.

It is most significant that the Hebraic and Hindu religions, which revere many prophets in their own traditions, did not engage in efforts to proselytize others. The assumption, based upon long practical experience, has been that though the Goal is one, the roads leading to it are many. The *Bhagavad Gītā* affirms that in every age God appears in different divine forms to answer the needs of those times. Swami Vivekananda pointed out that 'the Upaniṣads speak of no particular prophet, but they speak of various prophets and prophetesses.'[17] And he added: 'The old Hebrews had something of that idea.' Yes, we mentioned that before but, most explicitly, the prophet Jeremiah expressed that, when he declared to the people, in God's name: 'Ever since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I sent unto you all My servants the prophets—at times quite frequently.'[18]

One of the tremendous advantages of 'multiple prophecy' is that there is no limit set to the spiritual expansion possible. As a matter of fact, it is intended to include all. Eventually we must learn to see God and to serve God in everyone. When an attendant

[14] *Hasidism and Modern Man,* Horizon Press, New York, 1958, p. 256.

[15] *Eastern Religions and Western Thought,* Oxford University Press, New York (and London), 1959, pp. 382, 384.

[16] A Moynihan, *The Experience of God's Presence,* p. 92.

[17] *Complete Works,* Vol. VI (1956), p. 7.

[18] Jeremiah, 7.25.

once came running to Moses, and told him angrily that others were aspiring to prophecy, Moses replied: 'Are you jealous on my account? Would that all the Lord's people might be prophets!'[19]

This multiplicity of means within a tradition is then (by the same practical logic) made to apply to other traditions also. Thus, the prophet Micah preached: 'Let every people walk each one in the name of its God, even as we shall walk in the name of the Lord our God, forever.'[20] And the prophet Malachi, calling attention to the fact that among all peoples pure offerings are presented in God's name, asks very boldly: 'Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal faithlessly, a man against his brother?'[21]

The Vedantic position is beautifully expressed as follows: 'As different streams having their sources in different places, all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'[22]

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19 Numbers 11.24-29.

20 Micah 4.5.

21 Malachi 1.11; 2.10.

22 *Complete Works,* Vol. I (1957), p. 4.

Swami Vivekananda uttered these words at the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago, three-fourths of a century ago. It is appropriate to recall them now, in connection with the institution of Brotherhood Week. This particular tradition, in American religious life, is almost half a century old. There have been, in recent decades, some unusual stirrings in the field of interdenominational life. To use the apt metaphor of the late Pope John, a new breeze has begun to blow, and windows long shut have been thrust open. It is no exaggeration to say that much of the impetus behind the search for religious brotherhood (in this country and elsewhere) dates back to that famous Parliament.

Genuine religious brotherhood, so the cumulative wisdom and experience of the ancient religions teach, must allow for maximum freedom, while inspiring maximum faith and devotion. Yes, let everyone pursue his own path diligently and earnestly, and he will, through the grace of God—so all the great Teachers have assured us—surely come upon that one Truth which sincere seekers everywhere, and at all times, have sought and have found.

The relation to the Thou is direct. No system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy intervene between I and Thou. The memory itself is transformed, as it plunges out of its isolation into the unity of the whole. No aim, no lust, and no anticipation intervene between I and Thou. Desire itself is transformed as it plunges out of its dream into the appearance. Every means is an obstacle. Only when every means has collapsed does the meeting come about.

—Martin Buber
(I AND THOU)

TRENDS TOWARDS RELIGIOUS CONFRATERNITY

SWAMI ANANYANANDA

Recent decades have been witnessing a new phenomenon in the religious history of mankind. This is the refreshing spirit of confraternity noticeable in the various religions of the world. This phenomenon, which was in the background to begin with, became strikingly conspicuous with the advent of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, the two great teachers of inter-religious understanding and sympathy. Sri Ramakrishna, who is acclaimed as the embodiment of the harmony of religions, and his chief disciple, Swami Vivekananda, who carried the message of his Master to the different corners of the world, did not teach anything new so far as India was concerned. The content of their teachings was old, but the garb, the form, in which they presented them was new, very modern, in a language to suit the spirit of the times, which is catching the imagination of earnest people all over the world. The uniqueness of Sri Ramakrishna lies in the fact that he, in his own personal life, lived and practised the diverse religious paths, not only of the religion in which he was born, Hinduism, but of other faiths as well, of those that came to India from outside. Only after this, he proclaimed the underlying harmony of religions as an experienced truth, a realized fact. This truth, as lived and practised by him, was carried by Swami Vivekananda and spread broadcast in the countries of the West.

It is a fascinating story of over seven decades—from 1893, when Swami Vivekananda appeared at the historic Parliament of Religions at Chicago, to 1970, our own decade. It was in that venue that the 'Hindoo Monk' spoke of the great message of India—of his Master—of universal toleration and acceptance in the realm of religion. From that time, this spiritual stream of true catholicism has gathered much in volume and force, bringing its soul-elevating waters to different communities and producing a rich harvest of men and women of the finest character.

Not only in the lives of numerous individuals has this chastening influence brought about a change for better relationships among human beings, paving the way for mutual respect and understanding as far as religious practices and professions go, but even institutionalized religious movements and organized churches have began to speak of sympathy for, and understanding of, 'other' religions. They have begun to breathe the spirit of universality in religion, and speak of the unity of the religious spirit. They are discarding creedal dogmas and shedding sectarian views, and speak of the unity of religions. One can recall in this context what His Holiness Pope Paul said a few years ago at the end of the Ecumenical Conference held in the Vatican. He is reported to have said that there should be not only an intra-religious unity of all Christian denominations, but there should also be an inter-religious amity among *all religions* as such, based on mutual respect, sympathy, and understanding. His visit to India soon after that Conference and the glowing tributes he paid to her religious tradition speak eloquently of the new trends animating the minds of thinking men and women the world over.

In September 1968, at a Symposium on Religions held under the auspices of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago, in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Parliament of Religions, representatives of the major religions of the world met and gave expression to this

new spirit that is permeating the hearts and minds of men of faith. Similar sentiments and feelings have been expressed before this, during the past few decades, by persons who have sought the universal and the essential in religion. India, it can be claimed, stands in the vanguard of this great religious movement.

As far as India is concerned, this spirit of harmony among religions has been flowing in her veins from the days of dim antiquity. There is an old Sanskrit verse which expresses a lofty sentiment that is understood, and subscribed to, by most Indians, and certainly by all Hindus : 'Just as water falling from the sky goes to the sea, so the salutations offered to the various gods reach the supreme God (Keśava) alone.' This is the basic attitude of the Hindus towards all religions. This outlook can be traced back to the Vedas also, wherein it is proclaimed: 'That which exists is One ; sages describe It in various ways.'

Later, in the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* which truly represents Hinduism at its best, we find this attitude expressed in the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is looked upon as God Himself :

> —'In whatsoever manner men resort unto Me as their refuge, them do I receive in that very same manner. In all manner of ways, men follow my path.' A medieval Indian mystic sings : 'There may be different kinds of oil in different lamps ; their wicks may also be made of different materials ; but when the lamps burn, they give out the same flame, light, and illumination.'

The *Bhāgavata* puts this idea in these expressive words : 'That imperishable Reality, the ultimate Truth, is spoken of as Brahman, Paramātman, and Bhagavān by the knowers of Truth.' And in our own times, the same sentiment was embodied in the person of Sri Ramakrishna, who, as stated earlier, after actually practising different faiths in his own life and experiencing the same ultimate Truth in all of them, proclaimed : *Yato mat tato path*—'There are as many paths to the Divine as there are points of view.' Sri Ramakrishna said further :

> 'With sincerity and earnestness, one can realize God through all religions. The Vaiṣṇavas will realize God, and so will the Śāktas, the Vedāntists, and the Brāhmos. The Mussalmans and Christians will realize Him too. All will certainly realize God, if they are earnest and sincere.... The dogmatist says, "My religion alone is true, and the religions of others are false." This is a bad attitude. God can be reached by different paths.'[1]

This universal attitude, this spirit of acceptance of other faiths as true, is fundamental to Hinduism.

The advent of Sri Ramakrishna on the Indian scene, his realizations and teachings, and his meeting with Narendranath (who later became Swami Vivekananda) have opened a new chapter in the religious history of the world. Swami Vivekananda's appearance at the Parliament of Religions, his astounding success there, and his subsequent lectures in the U.S.A. and on the Continent have released a fresh flood of religious awakening in those countries. The present-day practice of establishing special chairs for the study of comparative religion in various universities and providing opportunities to students in schools and colleges to know about 'other' religions than their own, observable in several educational institutions throughout the world, can be directly traced to the impact produced by these two personalities on the minds of thinking men and women. This has resulted in opening a new vision, a new vista, for achieving greater success in religious fellowship, mutual love and respect, amity and understanding. As days pass by, we

[1] *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* translated by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4. Dialogue on the 11th March 1883.

are filled with the hope of nobler things happening in human relationship and co-operation on a world scale. This new mood and temper, this new outlook and attitude, has permeated the different spheres of human activity—political, social, economic, and cultural, not to speak of the religious.

Listen to what Arnold Toynbee, the well-known historian, says of this new attitude : 'Expect and respect differences'; 'religions are not contradictory, but supplementary'; 'let us mingle with people of other faiths and exchange our spiritual discoveries as never before'; 'from a study of comparative religion, we learn to read the sacred books of other people, and there we discover common ideals inspiring the whole human race. God withheld his prophets from no peoples'—utterances which could hardly be expected from orthodox sections a few decades ago.

Toynbee goes on to say : 'Religious conflict is sinful, because it arouses the wild beast in human nature'; 'religious persecution is sinful, because no one has a right to stand between another human soul and God'; 'religions cannot be inculcated by force; there is no such thing as a belief that is not held voluntarily'; 'absolute Reality is a mystery to which there is more than one approach'; 'the pilgrims exploring different approaches are fellow seekers of the same goal'—how similar are these expressions to Indian sentiments, and even the language, too, except that they are spoken in English !

That this new fraternal spirit of the times is animating the lives and thoughts of earnest religious seekers becomes evident from the words of Rabbi Ferdinand M. Isserman. He says : 'What does it matter whether men seek Him in Hebrew or in Sanskrit, in Latin, in English, or in French ? What does it matter to God by what name men call Him, whether they worship Him on Friday as the Muslims do, on Saturday as in the case with the Jews, on Sunday as among the Christians, or on other days as men of other religions do ? What does it matter to God what the robes of the clergy are, whether they be called ministers, priests, rabbis, or monks, as long as men seek Him whole-heartedly ?'

Similar extracts from other religious leaders can be quoted here, but they are not needed as the point in question has been made quite clear. Suffice to say that this new spirit is ever widening its circle, affecting silently but surely all other fields of human endeavour. The world today can no longer afford to remain divided into separate segments. It must move away from the constraining effects of the past, and discard racial, national, and religious prejudices and parochial rivalries. The world of tomorrow will be bound together by such sentiments as expressed by Rabbi Isserman. In it, there will be no sectarianism, no fanaticism, no exclusiveness, no rigidity and regimentation, and no monopolistic tendency. The future world will be a place for a meeting of minds and a communion of hearts. In this context, it will not be out of place to recall what Swami Vivekananda said at the concluding session of the Parliament of Religions :

> 'Each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.
>
> 'If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world, it is this. It has proved to the world that holiness, purity, and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance :

"Help and not fight"; "Assimilation and not destruction"; "Harmony and peace and not dissension".'

These words were uttered by the great Swami more than seventy five years ago, and we see today religious leaders of the world speaking the same language and expressing similar sentiments as pointed out earlier. Throughout the several addresses the Swami delivered at the Parliament, not a word of denunciation of any faith ever rose from his lips. His words always breathed a remarkable spirit of liberalism and universalism. Describing this in a touching manner, Roman Rolland, the French savant writes :

> 'Each time, he repeated with new arguments, but with the same force of conviction, his thesis of a universal religion without limit of time or space, uniting the whole *Credo* of the human spirit, from the enslaved fetishism of the savage to the most liberal creative affirmations of modern science. He harmonized them into a magnificent synthesis, which, far from extinguishing the hope of a single one, helped all hopes to grow and flourish according to their own proper nature. There was to be no dogma but the divinity inherent in man and his capacity for indefinite evolution.'

'Religion', says Swami Vivekananda, 'is the acceptance of all existing creeds, seeing in them the same striving towards the same destination.... Religion recognizes and is glad of the existence of all these forms because of the beautiful underlying principle.'

Elsewhere, with the same width of vision and depth of understanding, the Swami declares :

> 'I accept all religions that were in the past and worship with them all. I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship.... I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future.... The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded.'

Yet in another place, Swami Vivekananda has defined religion as the manifestation of the divinity that is already in man. This manifestation of divinity, according to him, is the goal of life. Religion is realization. Rituals and rites, books and creeds, temples and churches are all secondary details. They are only aids in our spiritual struggle, and do not possess any ultimate value so far as realization is concerned.

The life and message of Sri Ramakrishna and those of his illustrious disciple Swami Vivekananda have brought religion closer to men. Religion is something deep, which concerns the inner man, his inner evolution, his spiritual unfoldment. Religion has become purified and simplified in their lives, shorn of all its appendages, all paraphernalia, all the fuss and confusion that go on in the name of traditional religion. Religion now is a quiet personal endeavour, privately pursued, away from all public gaze, show, and demonstration. It is the 'practice of the presence of God'. It is a quiet but intense living, ever aware of the inner man struggling to unfold his potential divinity. In a word, it is perfection of character, *making of man* in the truest sense of the word, from whose heart will flow the milk of human compassion—who is truthful, pure, selfless, all-loving, self-sacrificing, and who perceives divinity everywhere.

This is religion at its best and purest, no matter by what name it is called. Rooted in the ancient teachings of the Vedānta and yet modern enough to embrace the present-day aspirations and expressions of the *One Religion,* this phenomenon of an all-inclusive and an all-accepting religion can be designated neo-Vedānta. For one who practises this religion, there is nothing secular, as he perceives divinity

everywhere. Everything is sacred to him. In it, all modes of worship, all modes of work, all modes of spiritual struggle, all modes of creation become so many paths of realization. Sister Nivedita writes about such an all-comprehensive religion thus :

> 'No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life is itself religion. To have and to hold is as stern a trust as to quit and to avoid.'

To one who lives this religion, the Sister adds :

> 'The workshop, the study, the farmyard, and the field are as true and fit scenes for the meeting of God with man, as the cell of the monk or the door of the temple. To him, there is no difference between service of man and worship of God.'

Look at the ideal of humanism from this new standpoint, provided with this spiritual basis and outlook. What an elevation it attains ! Man is divine ; there is the divine spark in him. Service to him is tantamount to worship of God. This is divine humanism—yet another path for man to grow and unfold himself spiritually and attain life's fulfilment. Man need not, and ought not to, run away from his duties and responsibilities. All that is needed on his part is the development of a new awareness, the manifestation of a new vision, of spiritual life. When this change is brought about in the inner life of an individual, the externals and the world about him acquire a new meaning, a new purpose. Everything becomes spiritually transformed to his vision.

Real harmony in the realm of religion can be ushered in only on the basis of true spirituality, on the essentials of the diverse religions, not on their external forms, rituals, dogmas, creeds, and so on. True spirituality consists in the development of purity of mind and heart, love for truth, selflessness, a concern for others, and such other elevating human virtues that make for true goodness and nobility of character, which are fundamental to all the major religions of the world. If only this spirit of true concord animates and permeates the minds of men more and more, the day is not far off when humanity can breathe a sigh of relief from religious fear and persecution, so much in evidence even today, despite the great progress made by our modern civilization, and bend its energy towards the reconstruction of a more human and humane world order.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Sri Ramakrishna received many earnest seekers who asked him important and searching questions about God and spiritual life. In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* itself there are nearly 450 such questions answered. A close study of these questions and answers will be found greatly helpful by all spiritual aspirants of today. They disperse doubts, give dependable intimations about God and His way, and provide authentic inspiring practical guidance for building the spiritual life—all of which are hard to find in one place in any scripture of the world.

In the column 'Sri Ramakrishna Answers' we intend to present selected questions and answers in as connected a manner as possible so as to meet the serious needs of sincere aspirants.

'To the Awakened India' is Swami Vivekananda's mandate in verse to *Prabuddha Bharata.* It is referred to or quoted in part in several of the articles in this number.

We are deeply thankful to most revered Swami Vireswarananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, for the blessings conveyed in his Message.

In this issue the Editorial, as might be expected, deals with *Prabuddha Bharata* itself—its purpose and achievement of purpose.

'A Dusky Philosopher from India' is a news-reporter's account of an interview she had with Swami Vivekananda in San Francisco in 1900. Apart from its first appearance in the *Chronicle* of San Francisco seventy years ago, it was once reproduced in *Prabuddha Bharata,* June, 1929. We reprint it here just as it was printed, with its own spellings, printing errors, etc. It is a more intimate and carefully written account than many of the newspaper reports of Swamiji in America. It was accompanied by one of the familiar photographs of Swamiji, in robe and turban, seated in a chair, at ease and smiling.

Swami Atulananda was a westerner who heard and met Swami Vivekananda in the West. In 'Swami Vivekananda's Mission in the West' he writes of Swamiji's impact on the West from personal knowledge, and even gives two or three of his own reminiscences of Swamiji. Swami Atulananda later became a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, and only recently passed away. Among the papers he left behind was this one.

In 'Profiles in Greatness', 'Explorer' introduces the subject of the moon in a particularly engaging and elevating connection—Sarada Devi the Holy Mother and Uncle Moon.

It is fitting that on the present occasion an account of the inception and purpose of *Prabuddha Bharata* should be given. Prof. Shankari Prasad Basu, who is teaching Bengali Literature in the Calcutta University, and a noted author credited with valuable research on Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita, has undertaken this task in 'Swami Vivekananda—The Journalist'. This article has been translated from the Bengali by Brahmachari Shyamal of the Ramakrishna Order.

Swami Vivekananda is known to have said 'I am a socialist.' Torn out of its context, that utterance has been interpreted variously.

'Swami Vivekananda and Socialism' points out that this utterance has to be understood in direct reference to his life and fundtmental message. The author, Swami Gambhirananda, is General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. At one time he served as Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata.*

'The First *Prabuddha Bharata* Editorial' outlines the intentions and policy that *Prabuddha Bharata* was originally designed to fulfil, in the light of directions received from Swami Vivekananda by letter. The first Editor was B. R. Rajam Iyer. His first editorial is reprinted as it originally appeared, with the exception of a fairly long paragraph using the story of the Sleeping Beauty to illustrate the 'marriage of the east and the west, which promises to come off [at] no distant date'.

Swami Prabhavananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, and Head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, U.S.A., contributes his memories of Swami Vijnanananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and at one time President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Swami Pavitrananda, in 'Kindle the Fire Within', tells us how the spiritual fire which is dormant in most of us, can be made to blaze up, with benefit to ourselves and the world at large. The Swami is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and Head of the Vedanta Society, New York. He was at one time Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata.*

Swami Satprakashananda, the founder-head of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, U.S.A., is a senior member of the Ramakrishna Order. In his learned article 'How is a Man Reborn?' he presents modern knowledge on the theme and convincingly shows how a complete answer to this very ancient and yet continuing question comes from Vedanta.

The author has reserved the copyright for the article.

At the beginning of 'A Traveller Looks at the World' an explanation is given of the circumstances in which Swami Ranganathananda answered these questions about his recent year-and-a-half lecture tour. The remaining portions of the interview will be continued in subsequent numbers of *Prabuddha Bharata.*

'Illuminating Dialogues' contains one of the most well-known dialogues of the Buddha that have come down to us.

In some quarters it is made out that the Ramakrishna Math and Mission work only in urban areas, among the middle classes. In 'Ramakrishna Mission Among the Tribals', an Observer points out that this is incorrect. His sketch of some of the work that the Mission is doing in tribal areas, refutes the criticism in one of its aspects.

Swami Tejasananda, author of 'The Message of *Awakened India*', is a senior monk and trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. At one time himself an editor of *Prabuddha Bharata—Awakened India—*, and having watched its progress over the course of many years, he is in a good position to write on its message.

In 'Desacralization' Swami Nityabodhananda points to the essentially religious nature of a good deal of western thought and striving today. If these appear to be merely secular, it is partly because of 'the barriers that man has constructed round the sacred'. The Swami is Head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Geneva, Switzerland,

In 'Social Tension : What Can We Do About It ?' Swami Lokeswarananda takes up a subject which is in the minds of many thinking people today. The Swami is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, West Bengal.

'In Search of a Hidden God' treats of those who are struggling to find God, and from whom He yet remains hidden. Swami Shraddhananda, the author, was at one time Editor of *Udbodhan,* Bengali organ of the Ramakrishna Order. He is now Head of the Vedanta Centre at Sacramento, California,

In 'Human Trends' Anna Nylund, a regular contributor to this feature, gives examples of works of 'practical Vedanta' which, on a recent visit to India, she saw going on.

In 'Two Ancient Religions: Judaism and Vedanta' Rabbi Asher Block deals with the universal aspects of Judaism, and with specific points of concordance between the Jewish and Vedic traditions. The writer is Rabbi of the Jewish Centre, Little Neck, Long Island, New York.

Swami Ananyananda, author of 'Trends towards Religious Confraternity', was at one time an Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata.* In his quotations from Arnold Toynbee and Rabbi Isserman we come upon almost the same words as those in which Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were teaching, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the essential agreement of all religions.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SRI SRI RAMAKRISHNA BHAGAVATAM (SANSKRIT TEXT WITH TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH AND BENGALI) BY PANDIT RAMENDRA SUNDAR BHAKTI-TIRTHA, 56/4 Grey St. Calcutta-6. pp. 96+876 Price: Rs. 25.00.

The author of *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Bhāgavatam* is a renowned Sanskrit scholar of West Bengal. The aged scholar's endeavour in writing the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in Sanskrit verses, which is the first of its kind, is highly commendable. Swami Vivekananda wanted that the time-honoured spiritual teachings should be propagated to one and all through popular languages and, at the same time, that Sanskrit should be cultivated to preserve the ancient culture. This book in Sanskrit verses is an effort in that direction. The language of the book is very lucid and simple; the *ślokās* sound spontaneous, so that even an ordinary Sanskrit student can easily understand them. Nevertheless, English and Bengali translations of the verses are provided so as to help those who are not conversant with Sanskrit. The theme of the book is arranged to suit its title, and it will be very interesting to the devoted heart.

In some places the narrative differs from the authentic books, such as *Śrī Rāmakṛṣna Līlā Prasanga.* The author, while elaborating the incidents, perhaps had it in mind that readers should acquire devotion to the Lord and not just be furnished with information alone.

Printing mistakes and lack of cautious proof-reading have affected, to some extent, the high standard of the book.

The writer's pious attempt has received high tributes from eminent persons, and the book deserves the support of all those who believe that Sanskrit literature should be enriched by the lives of modern Indian saints in that language.

SWAMI JYOTIRUPANANDA

RELIGION AND COMMON SENSE BY SIDNEY SWAIM ROBINS, Philosophial Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, 1966, pp. 204, Price $4.95.

While the author, Dr S. S. Robins, was a student

engaged in the study of both philosophy and psychology, his professor, George Santayana, advised him to drop one of the subjects. The advice was, however, ignored. The result was that Dr. Robins became a minister and then a Professor of Philosophy at Harvard. With this background of personal experience in two vital fields, Dr Robins makes an attempt, in the book under review, to present an approach to religion which may help modern man to meet the challenges of the modern technological age. It is true that the gap between organized religion and the challenges of technology is ever widening. Can this gap be bridged? Yes, says the author, by the insights which personal religion may offer. The answer is strikingly significant. But unfortunately the author does not develop it in all its grandeur. As a Christian, he elaborates it solely from the Christian standpoint. It is from this standpoint that Dr Robins gives a meaningful interpretation of Religion and Worship (Chapters 1-4). He then rapidly surveys the growth of Judaism and Christianity (Chapters 5-9), monasticism (Chapters 10-14) and ends by evaluating contemporary ideas and ideals, especially the political ideals in their bearing on religion, (Chapters 15-21). He concludes by deriving from his argument the essence of a life attitude which may help thoughtful men who wish to meet contemporary challenges.

'Religion and Common Sense' is an intensely personal book. It has the Christian slant. The author would have been more forceful and appealing had he chosen to imbibe the spirit of Vedanta or even Buddhism. Even so the volume is worth study by students in the philosophy faculty of our universities.

Prof. P. S. Naidu

PATANJALI'S VYĀKARAṆA MAHĀBHĀṢYA: AVYAYĪBHĀVA TATPURUṢĀHNIKA, Edited by S. D. Joshi with an English translation and notes, Published by the University of Poona, 1969. Pages xxvii+238. Price not mentioned.

The great commentary of Patañjali on the Sūtras of Pāṇini is a classic in many ways. It is a work on grammar, a treatise on the philosophy of language and grammar, a mine of information, and a remarkable example of the grand style simple. The study of the Mahābhāṣya, it is well said, is preferable to the governance of an empire. The present text gives us the original with a translation in lucid English.

The editors seem to feel that Patañjali was guilty of reading his own ideas into the words of Pāṇini and Kātyāyana. But the tradition of all the disciplines in our country has been such that each commentator read his own ideas into the text; and this gave him a vantage point. He became a link in the development of the traditional doctrine and at the same time his humility made the original text more profound. Persons in the past could accept a view if an authority could be shown for it; and this drew forth the powers of ingenuity. There is nothing wrong in this procedure, and one need not fight shy of it. It is the best thing that most critics in literature, aesthetics, and philosophy are doing today.

The introduction is a clear account of the problems faced by the editor-translators. It also gives a brief account of the problems covered in the text. The rendering is simple and faithful. The explanatory notes are helpful. This book must find a place in the hands of every student of the language.

Dr. P. S. Sastri

THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ. By Eliot Deutsch, Published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 383 Maddison Ave. New York 10017, 1966, pp. 192, price not mentioned.

This is a careful translation of the text of the *Gītā* along with a few preliminary essays, notes and remarks by Dr Deutsch. He studies the *Gītā* in the broader context of the Vedic tradition and emphasizes the synthetic nature of the approach and particularly the extended significance in which key terms like Yoga, Sāṅkhya, Sacrifice etc. are used in the text. He strikes the right note when he observes that the Karma Yoga of the *Gītā* combines in itself the essentials of the Jñāna and Bhakti Yogas. It is in the chapters on *Avatāra* and Grace that the author shows insufficient comprehension of Indian thought on the matter. The Doctrine of Grace is a high point in the teaching of the *Gītā*, not just one of the topics dealt with briefly (p. 186).

M. P. Pandit

THEISM OF PRE-CLASSICAL SAMKHYA: K. B. Ramakrishna Rao B.A. (Hons), Ph.D. published by Prasaranga: University of Mysore, Mysore, p. 444. 1966, Rs. 25/-.

The book under review is a serious attempt to establish the theistic character of the pre-classical Sāṁkhya. It is fit to be read by those who have real interest in the Sāṁkhya philosophy.

The author, an erudite scholar, has devoted much of his time to the study of Sāṁkhya philosophy of the pre-classical age: of course the study is made from his own point of view. While his findings are quite interesting and stimulating, it would be difficult to accept them *in toto,* because the judgements emanating therefrom are not always free from bias. The author seems to have developed a strong liking both for Sāṁkhya and theism: perhaps for this reason he had to strain himself to prove that pre-classical Sāṁkhya was theistic in all stages of its growth. Dr. Rao no doubt presents the book in a scholarly manner: he seems to have an impression that the classical Sāṁkhya has lost much ground by dropping God from its fold. He considers this step an unwise one as this has made classical Sāṁkhya suffer from some serious drawbacks. On page 256, the author says: 'The classical school is open to one main objection regarding the very starting of the work of *prakṛti* and regarding the purpose why she should evolve herself.' I am afraid, such views are open to criticism, as any critic might say that such objections are not quite sound. Let us examine this point carefully.

In the classical Sāṁkhya, the question of 'starting' does not arise at all, because the relation, which is suitable for creation, exists between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* from beginningless time. Just as Brahman is related to *māyā* from beginningless time, in the same manner, there is *anādi sṛṣṭyopayogi* relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. According to Sāṁkhya, *vivekāgraha* or nondiscrimination between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is beginningless and it is this *vivekāgraha* which is the real creative force of *prakṛti*. The mere relation between the two all-pervading principles is not the real motivating force behind creation. Since *vivekāgraha* or non-discrimination is beginningless, creation is also beginningless. Judged from this point of view, there should be no difficulty in understanding the emergence of the world from Nature even in the absence of God.

According to Sāṁkhya, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, being all-pervading, are always related. *Prakṛti* which is the cause of the world is a *prakṛti* permeated with consciousness (*cetanāviṣṭā*). So long as there is *vivekāgraha* or non-discrimination there is no distinction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. Hence, there is no separation between the conscious principle and the unconscious principle. *Cetanāviṣṭā prakṛti* is a mixed category in which *aviveka* is working as a creative force. Therefore, there can be teleological evolution from such a *prakṛti*. No doubt, the learned author has raised many objections against classical Sāṁkhya but all of them can be met without much difficulty.

Again, the missing verse, mentioned by Tilak, is one in which views of other schools are considered, whereas in Sāṁkhya Kārikā 72 it has been clearly stated that the views of other persons are not mentioned and refuted in the Sāṁkhya Kārikā. Hence, the genuineness of the said Kārikā is open to question. The view that the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* was posterior to the epic school, is also controversial. There are scholars who declare that *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* was pre-Buddhistic. The author's objection against Yoga theism does not seem to be convincing. If Yoga theism is theism in appearance only, then the theism of the Nyāya Vaiśeṣika philosophy cannot have a better fate.

Despite all that is said above, the book provides interesting reading and throws new light on many problems of the Sāṁkhya relating to its original character, thereby creating a desire to make a fresh survey of all available sources of the pre-classical Sāṁkhya.

DR ANIMA SEN GUPTA

SOME THOUGHTS ON INDIAN AESTHETICS AND LITERARY CRITICISM BY DR. K. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Head of the Dept. of Sanskrit, Karnatak University. Published by Prasaranga: University of Mysore, 1968. pp. 90, Price Rs. 2/-.

Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy delivered a course of lectures at the University of Mysore and these are now collected into the volume under review. The first lecture outlines the nature and scope of Indian aesthetics, the second is about Indian aesthetics in theory and practice, and the third deals with the Dhvani school.

Dr. Krishnamoorthy argues that Ānandavardhana's theory covers all aspects of beauty, that it goes beyond the earlier views, and that the theory is not different from the infection theory of Tolstoy. This is debatable. The tendency to ignore critics like Mahimabhaṭṭa, Kuntaka, and Bhaṭṭanāyaka must not be allowed. Tolstoy's theory has a very little place for beauty since it is primarily an ethical doctrine. The author happily considers the views of Mahimabhaṭṭa and others; but he does not go far. The second chapter offers a restatement of Indian aesthetic theories with reference to the Nāṭya Śāstra. This is a valuable part, and the author follows Abhinavagupta's interpretation. Still one cannot accept the asser-

tion that in Indian aesthetics we do not have the concept of aesthetic emotion. The very concept of *sādhāraṇikaraṇa* enunciated by Bhaṭṭanāyaka does involve the aesthetic emotion.

The last lecture is devoted to the Dhvani School of Criticism. Here we have the interesting view that *rasa* alone is *dhvani* par excellence. One wonders how the term *'rasadhvani'* appearing in Abhinavagupta has to be interpreted. If these are synonyms, we would have a language like the one employed by Touchstone when he spoke to the rustics. The analysis of some English poems and Sanskrit verses given in this lecture is interesting and provoking. One would have wished to ignore Gray's stanza only because the poem of Gray has little poetic beauty; rather, it is too explicit, thereby rejecting the statement of the dhvanikāra: *'Vibhāti lāvaṇyamivānganāsu'*.

P. S. SASTRI

NEWS AND REPORTS

UNITED CULTURAL INSTITUTE, SALISBURY

REPORT FOR 1968 AND 1969

Swami Nisreyasananda, Secretary of the Institute, completed a decade of African work in October 1969. In the second half of 1969, a branch of the Institute was formed in Bulawayo for the benefit of the local friends. By 5th September they had acquired a property, 4 acres in extent, nine miles from the city. It has rooms to accommodate 30 people. The front sitting-room is now being fitted up as a chapel. The entire establishment —till now a Motel—is being quickly transformed into a secluded Spiritual Retreat. Though this is held under the separate legal name, Umguza Holdings, it is in reality an Ashrama, meant for spiritual study and practices. Many well-attended meetings have already been held there. In Salisbury itself, a third town house was acquired, and rented out.

Use of Slides and Tapes: One new development is the introduction of coloured slides on the *Gitā*, and the simultaneous playing of taped comments in English and, wherever needed or possible, in Gujarati. To these were gradually added, about 37 coloured slides, showing among other things views of the Ramakrishna Mission Headquarters, the Dakshineswar Temple and the Mission's Centres in Mysore, Hollywood, and Paris. Over 60 coloured slides on the Rāmāyaṇa and about 22 taken from *Kaṭhopaniṣad* are all ready for showing when proper comments in English and Gujarati have been written and taped. The idea is to tape the comments in two languages, one following the other, slide by slide, and synchronize the tapes with the slides. Attempts are being made to secure about 1000 coloured slides showing the activities of the hundred and odd centres of the Ramakrishna Mission in India and abroad. Available slides were shown, and taped or oral comments made before a number of audiences in South Africa and Zambia.

Mission slides are expected to show that side of Indian life which made religious inspiration issue out spontaneously in different forms of service, both prior to and after Indian Independence. How the same phenomenon, with appropriate variations, is manifested in foreign countries also, will be clear from these slides. Is there anything useful that the devotees of God cannot achieve if religious intolerance and quarrels are systematically replaced by a wise mobilization of spiritual resources and their steady canalization for human progress, irrespective of race, creed or sex?

Ramakrishna Movement in Zambia and South Africa: The Swami visits the Republic annually once, and spends about three months, visiting important towns that invite him. There are three Ramakrishna Vedanta Societies there: (*i*) in Johannesburg (Box 5257 and 11326).

(*ii*) in Chatsworth (No. 45, 39th Ave, Umhlatuzana Township), and (*iii*) in Cape Town (16 York Road, Wynberg, & Box 33, Crawford). In Durban ten acres was gifted to the society on Vijaya Dashami Day, 1969. In Lenesia, over 20 miles from Johannesburg, a temple and a lecture hall are to be constructed at an estimated cost of about £ 60,000. The building will be erecetd on the six plots gifted to the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, and under its name. This Temple-Hall complex is expected to benefit all sections of the public in a vaiiety of ways—religious, cultural and philanthropic. The Cape Town Vedanta Centre has been conducting, among other things, a regular School of Yoga, combining physical exercises and philosophic studies.

Zambia: There are three Ramakrishna Vedanta Centres here also. The Swami is the Spiritual Director of them all. The Centre at Lusaka (Box 1176) conducts weekly sittings for prayer and philosophical studies. It made special efforts to celebrate Swami Vivekananda's Birthday in almost every important town quite recently. The Swami was able to attend the function in most of the towns. He utilized the occasion for showing many slides and to comment on them. Among the items gifted by Lusaka friends for humanitarian purposes, as part of the Birthday celebration, were seven wheel-chairs for invalids. There has been great enthusiasm in Lusaka and other towns. In Luanshya the Swami held group talks during his visits. The Centre there owns two town houses—both rented. In Mufulira the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre owns one house. In half of it, a specially constituted local committee is doing religious and cultural work suited to the place. The other half fetches some rent.

This year a humble beginning has been made, during the Birthday celebration, to familiarize the public with the Ramakrishna Mission literature in English, as well as its translated version in Gujarati, published by the Mission Centre in Rajkot.

The managements of the United Cultural Institute and of the various Ramakrishna Vedanta Societies and Centres are grateful to all those who have all along supported the work, and made great sacrifices to make it stable in every way. The Swami, in particular, thanks all who have shown him unwavering love, opened their homes for his stay, arranged for his talks, and suggested to him ways and means for opening up areas of fruitful service, wherever possible.

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

Report for 1968-69

The Hospital forms a part of the Advaita Ashrama activities. It came into being in response to the pressing needs of neighbouring and far-off villages, including those on the northern frontier areas of India, where live some of the poorest people of our country. Their distress in sickness would touch any heart if only it were known. As a sheer necessity a dispensary was started on a humble scale in 1903 to give relief to the suffering people. Since then it has been growing in size and serviceability until it has become a well-equipped small rural hospital.

A large number of patients come daily across hills and dales on *doli,* horse-back or foot, sometimes trudging a distance of 50 to 60 miles, taking four or five days for the journey.

The hospital stands within the precincts of the Ashrama, and is under the charge of a monastic member qualified for the work. A qualified resident doctor treats the patients with the help of competent assistants. Service is done in a spirit of worship irrespective of the caste and creed of the sufferers and is completely free of charge. Earnest efforts are made to maintain a high standard of efficiency in service.

There are 23 beds in the hospital, but sometimes arrangements have to be made for a much higher number of indoor patients.

The total number of patients treated during the period under review in the Indoor department was 729. In the Outdoor department 19,756 patients were treated, of which 10,310 were new and 9,446 repeated cases.

Needs: Besides donations and gifts towards the general fund, there is need of permanent fund for the endowment of hospital beds. Money is also required for necessary repairs, additions to the present hospital building, and improvement of the premises.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, KANPUR

REPORT FOR 1968-69

The activities of this centre come under three heads: spiritual and cultural, educational and medical.

Spiritual and Cultural: Besides regular worship, prayer and meditation in the Ashrama shrine, religious classes were held on Sunday evenings in the Mission premises. The monastic members of the Mission addressed several meetings in response to invitations from local and outside educational institutions and cultural bodies.

The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda, Sri Krishna, Sri Rama, Buddha and Jesus Christ as also the Siva Ratri, Kali Puja were observed with due solemnity.

The library and reading room in the Ashrama premises were opened in 1967. Reading room received 5 newspapers and 47 periodicals. The library had 2808 books of which 202 were issued. The daily average attendance in the Library was 35.

The Sarada Mahila Samiti was founded in 1965 to create a group of women spiritually united and to serve the cause of women and children in the field of education. The members of the Samiti met on Wednesday evenings in the Ashrama to hold the classes on Narada Bhakti Sutras and other religious subjects.

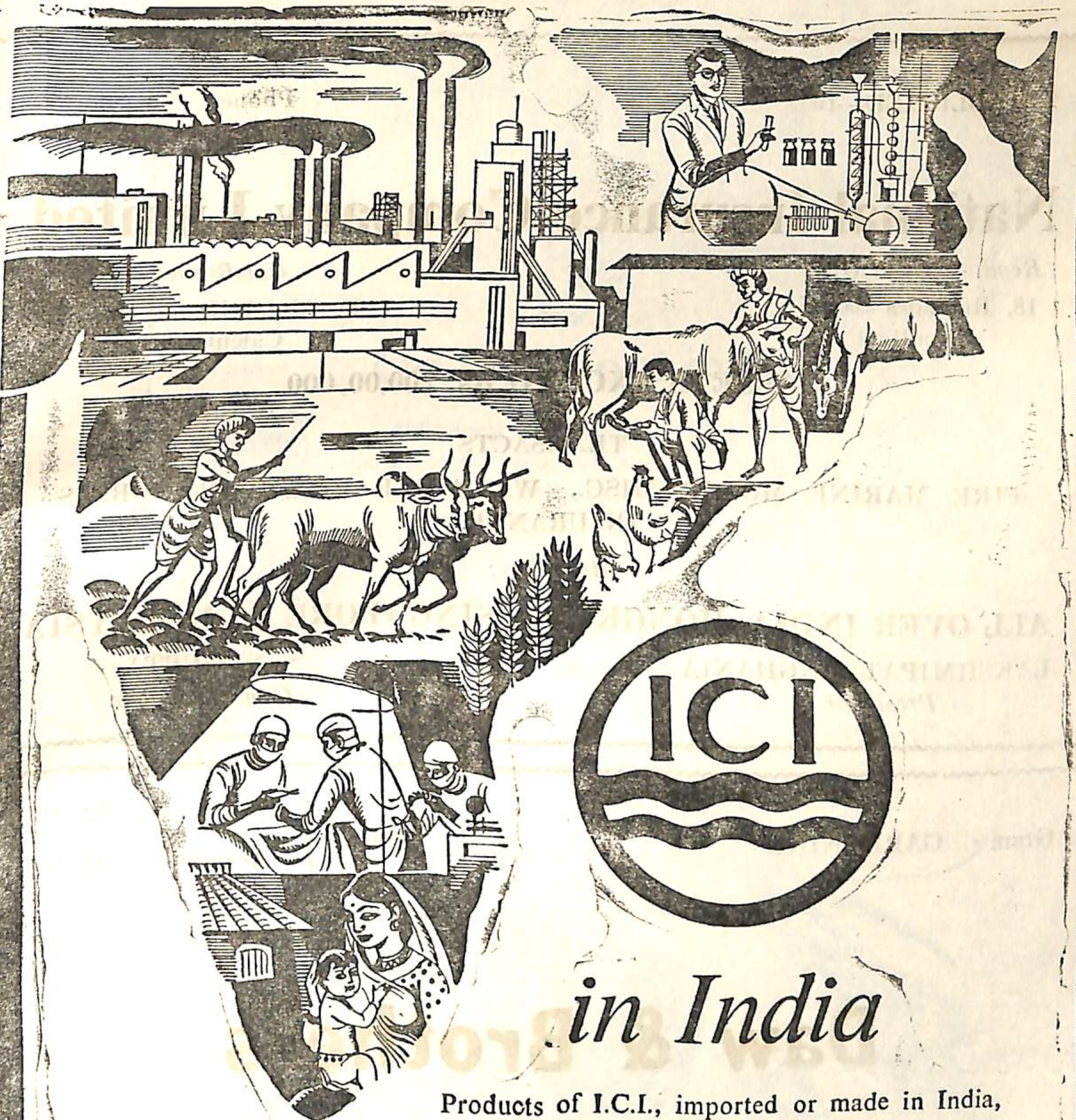
Educational: Average enrolment in the year under review was 680. The High School percentage of result last year was 100% with 53 students in the first division and none in the third. There were 79 distinctions in the various subjects. 9 students came in the National Merit and 10 students got the State Merit. The school is again in receipt of the Efficiency Grant for the second time.

The school library has now 6277 books. During the year under review 3391 books were issued to students and the members of the staff. The reading room with 16 boys' magazines and the newly introduced class room libraries under the 'Self-Sufficient Class Room' provided sufficient impetus to the reading habit of the students.

Medical: The Charitable Hospital, started in 1924 and moved to its own building in 1939, has been catering to the medical needs of a large number of poor patients. Both allopathic and homoeopathic systems of treatment are available in the hospital. It has five departments: general, ophthalmology, pathology, dentistry and radiology. All these departments are fairly equipped.

The total number of patients treated during the year under review was 251,988 of which more than 75% were women and children. 177 minor operations were performed and 26,754 injections were given. The laboratory handled 215 specimens. The X-ray department has become a source of great relief to the poor patients, the number of cases examined during the year being 102.


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RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA
AND
VEDANTA LITERATURE
A Detailed List

BOOKS ON SRI RAMAKRISHNA

	Price
* Life of Sri Ramakrishna Foreword by Mahatma Gandhi Board :	8·00
Cloth :	10·00
* The Life of Ramakrishna By Romain Rolland	5·50
* A Short Life of Sri Ramakrishna	1·25
Sri Ramakrishna And His Mission—By Swami Ramakrishnananda	0·62
* Sri Ramakrishna And Swami Vivekananda—By Jawaharlal Nehru	0·50
* Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna	5·00
Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna	5·00
* My Master—By Swami Vivekananda	0·70
* The Message of Ramakrishna	0·30
* Ramakrishna And His Disciples—By Christopher Isherwood	12·50
Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master	25·00
The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna	25·00
Ramakrishna Upanishad By C. Rajagopalachari	1·00
Tales And Parables of Sri Ramakrishna	3·00
Words of the Master *Compiled* By Swami Brahmananda Board :	0·75
Cloth :	1·50
* The Apostles of Sri Ramakrishna	7·50

BOOKS ON HOLY MOTHER

	Price
Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi—By Swami Gambhirananda Board :	12·50
Cloth :	14·00
Sri Sarada Devi The Holy Mother—By Swami Tapasyananda & Swami Nikhilananda Board :	12·00
Cloth :	13·50
* At Holy Mother's Feet—By Lila Majumdar and Swami Gambhirananda	5·00
* The Message of Holy Mother	0·30

WORKS ON AND OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

	Price
* The Life of Swami Vivekananda—By His Eastern & Western Disciples Board :	12·00
Cloth :	13·00
* The Life of Vivekananda And The Universal Gospel—By Romain Rolland	6·00
* Vivekananda (A Biography) By Swami Nikhilananda	5·00
The Master As I Saw Him—By Sister Nivedita	5·50
Notes of Some Wanderings with Swami Vivekananda By Sister Nivedita	2·00
* A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda	1·25
Swami Vivekananda And His Message—By Swami Tejasananda	5·00
* What Religion Is : In The Words Of Swami Vivekananda	12·00
* The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda (In Eight Volumes) Per Vol. Board :	7·00
Cloth :	10·00
Per Set. Board :	52·00
Cloth :	75·00
* Raja Yoga Board :	3·00
Cloth :	4·75
* Bhakti Yoga Board :	1·25
Cloth :	2·75

		Price
* Karma Yoga	Board :	1·25
	Cloth :	2·75
* Jnana Yoga	Board :	3·60
	Cloth :	5·50
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* Lectures from Colombo to Almora		5·00
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* Practical Vedanta		1·25
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* Essentials of Hinduism		0·75
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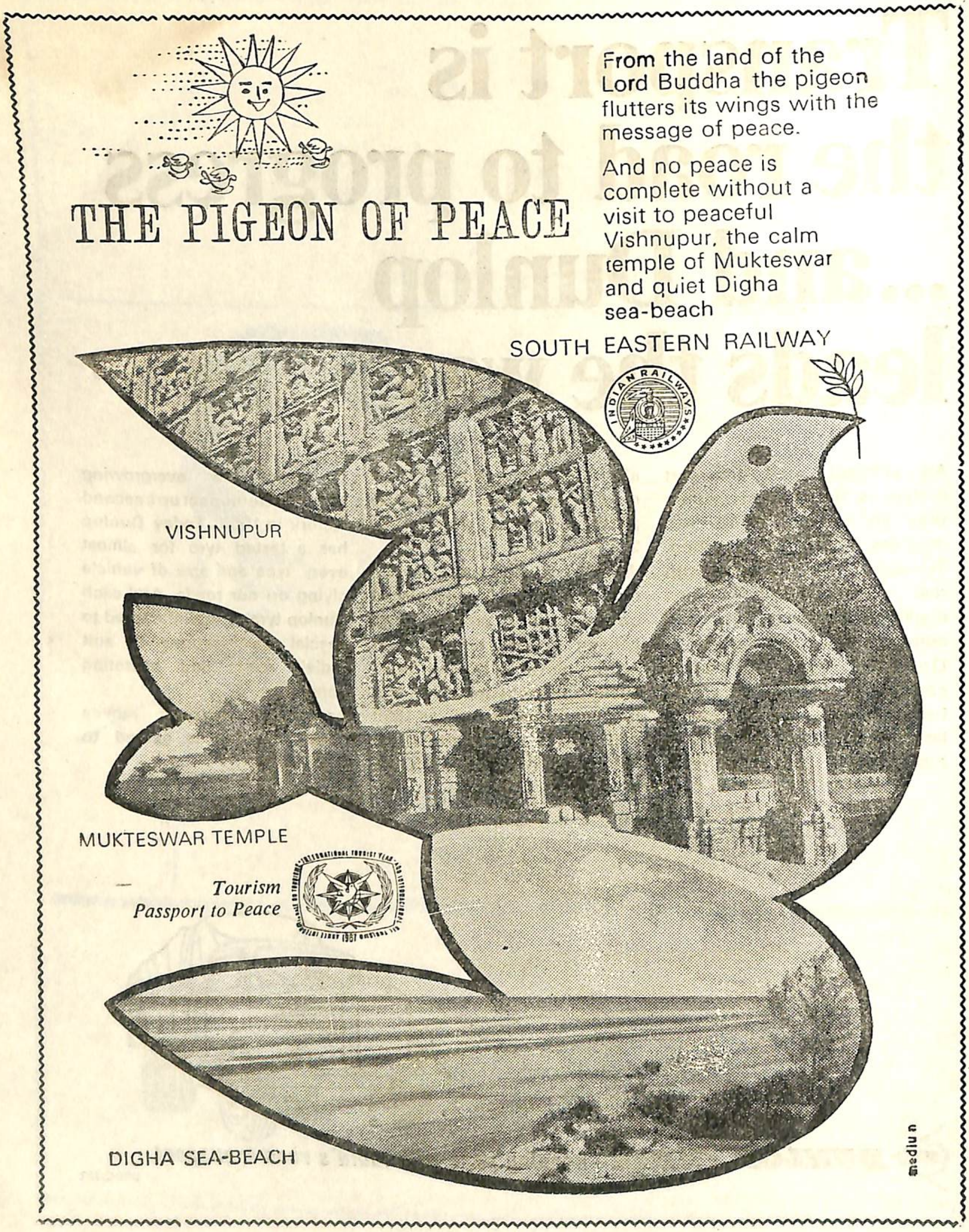
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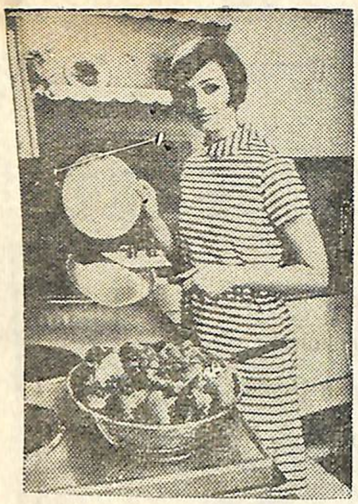
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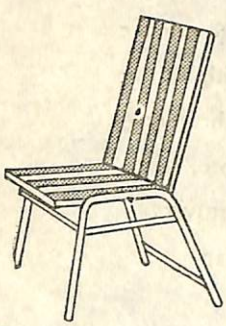
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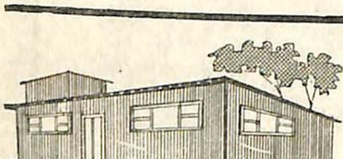
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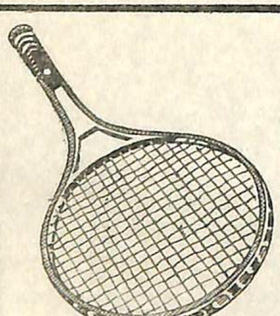


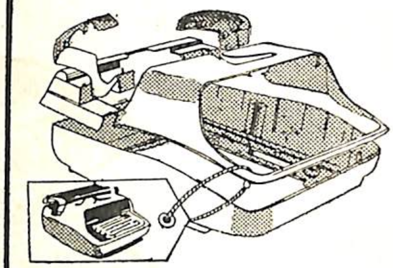

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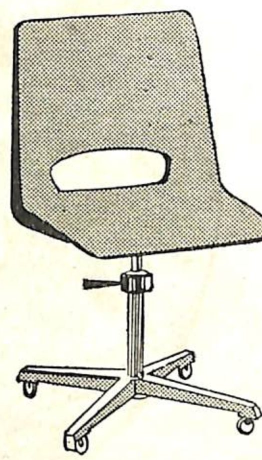


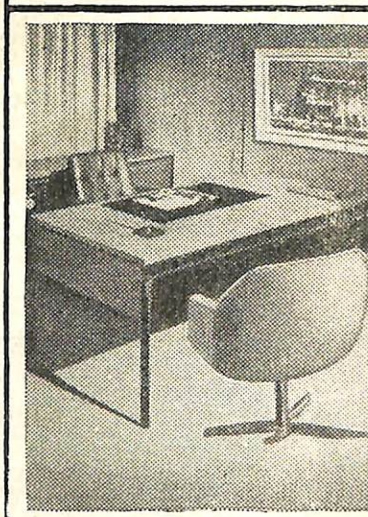












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